Yankee Fighter

LIEUTENANT

JOHN F. HASEY

AS TOLD TO JOSEPH F. DINNEEN

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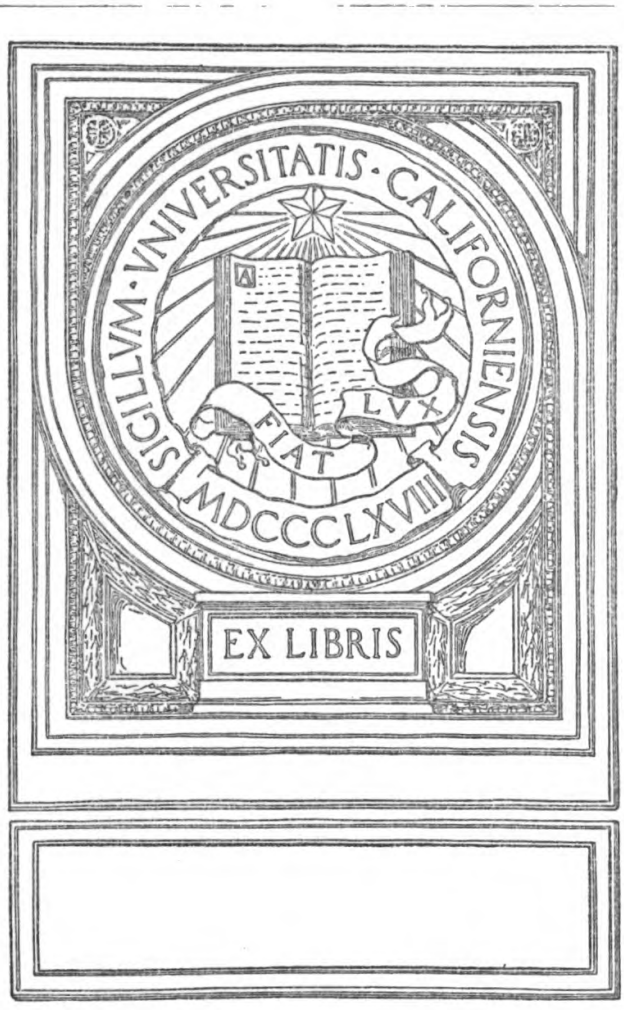

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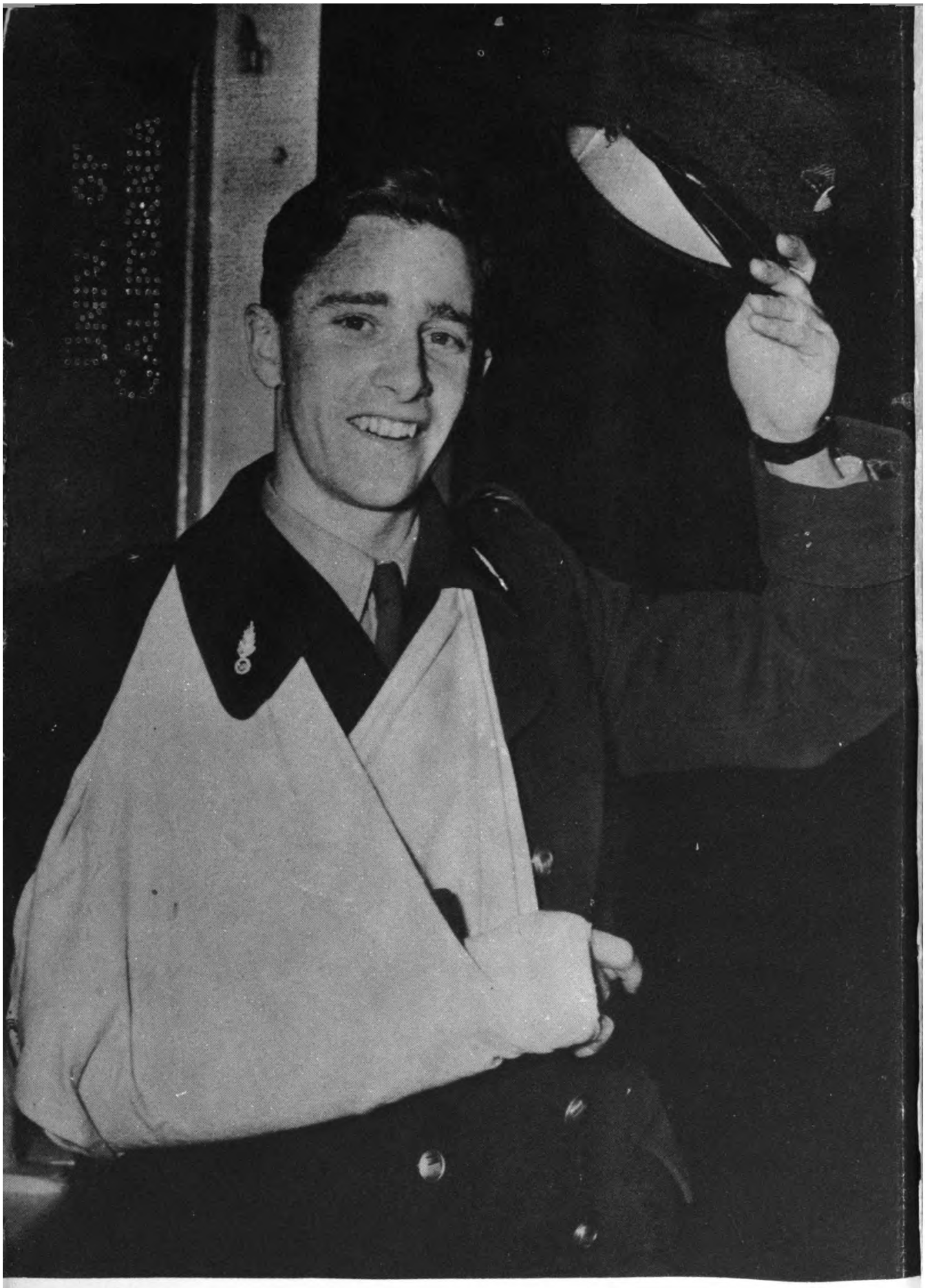

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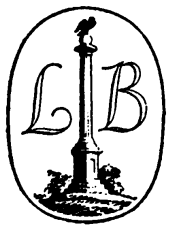
YANKEE FIGHTER

The Story of an American in the Free French Foreign Legion

BY

LIEUTENANT JOHN F. HASEY

AS TOLD TO JOSEPH F. DINNEEN



LITTLE, BROWN AND COMPANY · BOSTON

1942

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Foreword

DEAR JACK: —

This is your story just as you told it, and as you might have written it if you had been able to get to your own typewriter, instead of lying in a hospital bed with your head bandaged and a tube in your throat to control your vocal apparatus.

When we first talked about this story, you wanted to be sure that you would not look like a Rover Boy. You wanted the hero stuff played down, and above all you wanted to advance the cause of the Free French.

There is no way that I can carry over to type the glint of amusement in eyes that peeked out of bandages, or your own effort to minimize your own exploits, without intruding myself to stop the reader here and there to say: "Jack was not boasting. He was merely stating a fact. He wanted to skip over it and dismiss it quickly, but I held him

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up and made him dwell upon it and amplify and elaborate." And this, I think, would have been out of place.

Because this is your own story, it had to be told in the first person singular in your own words as nearly and as accurately as I could transcribe them. Perhaps I have used some phrases that may make you wrinkle your nose, or cringe a little. "Yes, I did it," you told me often in the hospital, and asked: "Do I have to say I did it?" I thought you had to say it to tell the story properly. If you are embarrassed by it, I am taking the blame here and telling the reader that the fault is mine.

Sincerely,
JOSEPH F. DINNEEN

Boston, July 15, 1942

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Chapter One

DRUMS rolled. Bugles blared. The sun was bright and hot and the town square was crowded with cheering Syrians surrounding a formation of white-capped Free French Legionnaires. I was being decorated with the Free French Order of Liberation, and the Croix de Guerre with Palm. General Georges Catroux called my name in the awkward, mixed accent of a Frenchman pronouncing the Yankee syllables, "John Hasey." I advanced. He touched me gently on the shoulders with his sword, pinned the medals on my tunic and kissed me on both cheeks, a practice that I still find mildly embarrassing, the more so on this occasion because my head was thickly swathed in bandages, I had a heavy beard, and the General could not find a patch of cheek to kiss.

I listened to the citations and was uncomfortable for several reasons. I think that any man shrinks

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from public praise. I could not speak above a whisper, and then only with the aid of a steel tube in my neck that I had to regulate with my finger to govern the amount of air in it and in my throat. My jaw had been shot away and my vocal cords had been damaged. I was homesick, too, and my eyes were misty. I didn't hear the citations and knew I could read them later, anyway. I was thinking of a big, comfortable house on Union Street, in Bridgewater, Massachusetts; of my mother, who is still youthful, blonde and attractive; and of my father and the tennis court he built in back of the house, where he taught me and my brother Dick to play. I was thinking of Mrs. Sample and Mrs. Carroll, two teachers in school, recalling how Mrs. Carroll let me sit all one year at a desk by the window, where I could look out upon the girls in Teachers' College, and see the fire engines pull out of the station across the way every time an alarm was sounded.

I thought, too, about Guita in Paris, and the fun we had together, and wondered what had happened to her now that the Nazis were there. I thought of another girl, silhouetted against the evening twilight horizon, in Finland, looking aloft for planes. She was nice, too. What had happened to her? I was remembering placing a necklace about

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Marlene Dietrich's neck, and catching it in her hair . . . not that I was making her a gift of it . . . I was selling it to her as a *vendeur* in Maison Cartier in Monte Carlo. I was thinking of a conversation with the Duchess of Windsor about peanut brittle as I showed her jeweled crests after the abdication . . . and I knew that I would never again be hunting prospects and collecting commissions from that famous jewelry house.

The band sounded off. Legionnaires passed in review in my honor. Standing beside General Catroux, I tried again to rationalize a decision that had brought me into twelve countries, three continents, six colonies, covering 50,000 miles, fighting four enemies in three years. And this was not the end. I was to be shipped off to Jerusalem for plastic surgery. The soldiers passing before me were the toughest in the world. I knew. I had fought with them; and yet they were an anonymous collection. They knew as little about me personally as I did about them.

My own platoon was there, with Blashiek, my faithful batman — or dog-robber, as he is known in the United States Army; and when I say "faithful," I mean exactly that. For six months that tough Polish soldier had cared for me as carefully as any Southern mammy, fed me fresh mule meat

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when I was starved, and tactfully neglected to let me know what it was. He helped carry me back to a First Aid station outside Damascus when my jaw was shot away and my chest and arms were sprayed with machine-gun fire. It was upon him that I leaned when my legs began to wobble. I think there might have been pride in the platoon's eyes, although it may have been sheer curiosity to see what I looked like with a bandage mask over my face. I was never able to classify their emotions. They were professional fighting men. They would fight for anybody. Thirty-five per cent of the Free French Foreign Legion were completely indifferent to the Axis and its aims, never interested or concerned with the broader political aspects of what they were fighting for, completely loyal to the Free French, and worse than barren ground for fifth columnists, because these men would kill anyone who suggested treason or sedition.

I had my share of them in my platoon, and willingly accepted all of them assigned to me because they were fearless, dependable fighters. There were forty men in my command, all told, divided into three groups of twelve with four utility men as observers and runners. I had about every race and nation represented among them. Curiously, there were few French in the platoon. Most of the French

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were in another regiment. One of my sections of twelve was made up entirely of men who had come out of the Spanish Civil War, and I had a sprinkling of unclassified men of uncertain races. They all spoke French exclusively and all commands were given in French.

In my mind, this six-months campaign divided itself into three phases; the third and for me final phase began with the invasion of Syria at Dera'a, our invasion point and jumping-off place, and ended here in the square at Damascus. We had come by boat from Massawa (where we had concluded the second phase by taking the town), through the Red Sea and part way through the Suez Canal, and crossed Palestine and Trans-Jordan by train and bus, marched a few miles, deployed, and moved in upon the Arab village. As an engagement, it was routine and not very exciting. Our mission was to drive the Vichy French out of the place and take it over for the purpose of establishing an ambulance depot and setting up a hospital, in anticipation of the fight that we knew would be stiff and costly, in men and material, for the city of Damascus, capital of Syria.

For us, Dera'a was merely a way-station on the route, held by a handful of Vichy French, mostly snipers, easy to dispatch. We rolled into the village

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without trouble, mopped it up, and were inconvenienced more by the Arabs than we were by the enemy. They took no part in the fighting, and were, perhaps, the most disgusting neutrals we had to deal with: dirty, filthy, with an odor about them that is offensive to white nostrils. Like all Arabs in such towns, they were cute, foxlike sneak-thieves, and would steal anything that wasn't nailed down. There were between one hundred and fifty and two hundred of them in the town, a few Bedouins and the rest permanent residents in mud huts. None of them could ever keep his hands off a loose gun. One of them came to us with a Hotchkiss machine gun, and wanted to swap it for ten rifles. An officer took the machine gun away from him and shot him dead as a lesson to the others. When you've shot and killed so many men that you've long since lost count, one more doesn't matter much, as long as it achieves the desired end, and there is nothing to be gained by taking time out to balance nicely the scales of justice. That kind of petty thievery ended immediately.

It looked to us as though the pathway to Damascus would be a lead-pipe cinch, but not for long. When we organized to move forward, we found that the departing Vichy French had blown up all lines of communication. We had no tanks, and

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what few trucks we had were diverted to bringing up our own supplies. All bridges ahead had been blown up, and roads were blasted in awkward places. Somewhere ahead of us were the enemy lines. Senegalese troops went out ahead of us to take the first two lines a few days after we arrived at Dera'a. We followed for the purpose of penetrating enemy lines as deeply as we could over flat, hot, desert land.

A few days later, my command was plodding over rocky shale and ground like pebbles when we saw a formation of American Glenn Martin bombers flying toward us, and all had the French colors. It was the first time we had seen French planes. We waved and cheered and beckoned to the pilots to come closer. They did. They flew a few hundred feet over us, looked us over, climbed, and then dive-bombed the hell out of us. They were German pilots, flying captured Glenn Martins disguised as French planes. We spread ourselves out on the shale; and when it was over, I found that shrapnel had shattered the foot of one of my men. I had to cut it off above the ankle — and left him there, hoping fervently that an ambulance crew would find him and carry him back.

The tradition of the Foreign Legion is no myth. It is a hard-bitten, and, at times, ruthless practice.

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If you fall and can't take care of yourself — if you can't get back under your own power or are not discovered in time — you die where you fall. An advance cannot be held up and the ranks cannot be decimated by soldier details to care for the injured. Colonials are sent back to First Aid and dressing stations. Imperials are sent back. But Legionnaires get back by themselves — except for officers, whose batmen stand by them.

I was not reviewing in my mind a whole campaign, or even a phase of it, as I stood beside General Catroux, reviewing the troops. But certain scenes stood out as I looked upon the marching men with whom I would probably never again fight.

I thought of a day on that tortuous pilgrimage to Damascus when I went back with my platoon to rest, and we flopped on the ground in the center of a hollow square of soldiers who were to protect us, and dropped into a sleep of exhaustion. We awakened when another company of French soldiers arrived to rest, and, as is customary, asked the commanding officer what to do with their arms.

"Stack them," he said and our eyes popped open. The order brought us fully awake. Arms were never stacked. Ours were tied to our wrists. When the

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rifles were stacked, we heard the officer say: "I'll shoot the first man who moves."

Now we were sitting upright. I thought of a fifth column and was bewildered, until I observed what the officer had been quick to observe. A company of Vichy French had stumbled among us to rest. We spoke French; they spoke French — and they had made a mistake that sent them back as prisoners of war.

We began this phase of the campaign late in May. On June 20, when I was within sight of Damascus, I got mine. I was in an advance position north of the city, and my platoon was deployed behind me, when I walked into a spray of machine-gun fire as unexpectedly and surprisingly as a householder walking across the stream from the nozzle of a garden hose in a back yard. A numbing sensation of being pushed back while going forward, a stinging across my neck and chest . . . and instead of thinking glorious thoughts, I thought only: "Oh, hell." My neck was streaming blood and my jaw felt as if it had been dislodged from its hinges. I put my right hand up to hold it in place and found that a bullet had grazed my little finger and gone through my thumb. I put my left hand up to my chin and held it in place.

An obsession to get to a place can overcome every

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instinct, I found. I had wanted to get to Damascus. I was determined to get there; but my batman took charge and got me back to a dressing station. My men were now without an officer. Then a half-mile back I met one. From habit, I tried to salute, but my chin dropped when I removed my hand.

"Never mind saluting," he said. "What is it?"

Then I found that I couldn't talk. I changed hands and got a pencil from my tunic pocket and wrote: "*Men without officer forward.*"

He nodded and I continued on to the First Aid station.

The sun was burning hot and the heat was intense that day. As I was lying on a stretcher in the afternoon an orderly passed and I beckoned to him to get my pencil from my tunic pocket and I wrote on a pad: "*Who won?*"

"We did," he answered, and I was satisfied. Then, darkness closed down upon me, and when next I regained consciousness, I was in the hospital. I was moved about from one hospital to another until I finally came to rest in one in Jerusalem. I remained there for weeks, so disfigured that when the American consul called he left his womenfolk outside the door of my room to spare them a sight of horror. When other women blundered in with books for injured soldiers, they took one look at

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FOUR DAYS AFTER BEING WOUNDED IN THE DESERT

ONE MONTH AFTER WOUND,
WITH FIRST DECORATION

AT THE SCOTTISH HOSPITAL,
NEAR JERUSALEM

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me and scurried away, forgetting to leave the books that I would have been glad to read.

My first visitor in the hospital was the Chaplain of the regiment, who arrived soon after I was carried in, to give me the last rites of the Roman Catholic Church. I liked the Chaplain. He was a genial, kindly fellow, but it already had been my observation that he would administer the last rites on almost any pretext. I waved him away with both hands. I am not a Catholic, and I supposed he knew it, but it was not my intention to brush him aside for that reason. I respected the good offices and intention behind the proffer. What I was trying to say with that wave of my hands was: "Don't be silly. I'm not going to die."

He understood. His eyes brightened. He smiled and touched my shoulder gently. "*Bon courage,*" he said and left me.

Another visitor dropped in a few days later and he, too, was wearing clerical garb. I had just awakened from a sound sleep. "Hello," he greeted in perfect English, "I've come from the Garden of Gethsemane."

Now, I submit that this is a disconcerting salutation to a man in the hospital coming out of a deep sleep, and I couldn't properly orient myself until he went on. "I'm Brother Julian. I'm an American,

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too, from Providence, Rhode Island, and I'm stationed at Gethsemane, just outside Jerusalem. How're they treating you?"

Then I knew I was still on earth.

Troops and thoughts passed in review, and when the last file had gone, I turned to General Catroux and said: "*Merci, mon Général.*"

He smiled. We were joined by other officers, and left for a club where we could have a drink of beer. This was my one day out. Tonight I must be back at the hospital. We sat at a table and ordered. The waiter came to me, and although I had learned to manipulate the tube that gave me a faint speaking apparatus, I was not yet expert at it, and I ordered a beer in a whistling mumble. The waiter leaned closer to hear me, and I repeated, but he could not understand.

"You heard him," an officer barked, and glared at the waiter.

He scampered away and came back with a beer. I'll never know how he figured it out.

When the day was done, I returned to the hospital, lonely and downhearted. I had been decorated with two highly coveted honors, it is true, but very soon now the Free French Foreign Legion would be moving on, and I knew that I would never again

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LIEUTENANT HASEY DECORATED BY GENERAL CATROUX

(*Order of Liberation, Croix de Guerre with Palm*)

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rejoin my command. They would be gone, killed or scattered, and I would be in a hospital in Jerusalem.

Back in the hospital again, nostalgia intensified, and I looked forward to going home. Cabled news stories had trickled back to the United States saying that I was broke and destitute there. How they came, or who authorized them, I don't know, but they were untrue. The Free French had taken excellent care of me. Two more minor operations were scheduled, and then, after gaining strength, I would be ready to go home. Already the wheels were in motion at the State Department to ease the path for me.

Contemplating home, I took stock of myself. I was twenty-five years old and had already lived a half-dozen crowded lives — in the United States; in France, Finland and Africa. What had brought me into the Free French movement? What had brought me into the Free French Foreign Legion? What had brought me to this hospital bed in Jerusalem?

Looking back, I decided that the obstacle in my road that had détoured me on this strange journey was the difficulty I had had learning French in

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preparatory schools and college. Regularly I had flunked the subject entirely, or barely got by. My mother is an alumna of Wheaton. She got good marks in French. My brother, Dick, had little trouble with it. I had picked this subject; my parents approved. But fluency in it evaded me, and I became so exasperated that I chucked everything and went to France.

I did not set out to be a soldier of fortune or an international adventurer. I set out to learn the language as it is spoken in its native land; to master it — because I couldn't stand being licked by it. I had the time, the opportunity and the money. Finally, when I did become reasonably fluent in it, I stayed on to learn the business of precious stones and jewelry in one of the world's most famous houses. And I wound up in the Foreign Legion.

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Chapter Two

I WAS born in Brockton, Massachusetts, November 3, 1916, and was three years old when we moved into a big, thirteen-room house, comfortable, well-furnished, and pleasant, on Union street, Bridgewater. My brother, Dick, was a year lacking four days older than I, and we had a room with twin beds on the second floor, and a playroom on the top floor. We had everything within reason that we wanted, bicycles, games, our own tennis court on the grounds, where my father taught us to play, a saddle pony, and every summer my brother and I went to boys' camps.

As a boy, there was nothing warlike in my make-up. It seems to me that I always waited for a fight to be brought to me, and never went around trying to find one. My father wanted to be sure that Dick and I always would be able to take care of ourselves, and when I was in the fifth or sixth

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grade, he hired "Inky" Kilbridge, a local professional boxer, to come to our house and give us lessons. Once a week we moved the furniture out of the living room. "Inky" and Dick mixed it up, and then "Inky" and I sparred around; and in the finals Dick and I were always matched, with "Inky" as referee.

In 1925, one of the golden years of the fabulous twenties when the stock market was climbing, my parents took Dick and me to Europe. Part of that mission was to visit the grave of Uncle Willard Hasey, who fell at Soissons in the first World War. The trip made a great impression upon me, and I think now that it inspired a vague thought that as my ancestors had come West to carve out careers in a new country, it might be a reasonable destiny for me to go East to carve out a career in an old one. France, Paris, Monte Carlo, Antibes, Cannes, Deauville, fascinated me as a child, a spell that never has been broken. I think I knew then that I would have to go back there; that memory of it would draw me back, even against advice and what might appear to be better judgment when I grew up.

Throughout my school years, I was far more interested in the athletic than the academic side of education. My brother and I dressed alike. All of

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our equipment was alike. Whatever he got, I got in duplicate. When he picked up a child's disease, he handed it along to me. When I caught it first, I passed it on to him. We had mumps together, and when Dick's tonsils became troublesome, and a doctor decided to take them out, I went along, too. I don't think it occurred to me that I did not need to lose my tonsils. Everything that happened to Dick always happened to me; when the doctor looked at me and then at my mother and said "Both of them?" I nodded and she nodded, and I lost a perfectly healthy pair of tonsils.

The first time I saw Paris I was eleven years old, wearing my first tailor-made suit, a duplicate of the one worn by my brother Dick. With my mother and father we had toured Scotland and Holland. My father was an executive and director of one of the largest shoe-manufacturing firms in the world. The company had retail stores in cities throughout the United States, and in all of the principal cities of the continent of Europe. For the family this was to be our first vacation together. The lines of communication of New England industry, before the war, were extensive. Because I was a member of a family associated with a world-wide shoe organization, I could never be out of touch with home or a home atmosphere for long.

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A home touch was always as close as the nearest of our retail stores, and my earliest friends in London and Paris were managers and salesmen in these stores.

My father remained with us only a short time on that first visit to Paris, and hurried home after a few weeks because of the pressure of business. My mother had hired an apartment at Neuilly, and as soon as we saw him off at the Gare de Nord, we moved into it. It was an attractive place, on the third floor, with a fireplace in the salon, where I slept on a couch; a bedroom, kitchen, and bath. There was no lift and we had to walk up. We leased it from Captain Vivien Delbos, who later became one of my best friends. He was in his early forties, tall, thin, with a long nose. He was an artist. (I sat for a portrait by him which now hangs in my home in Bridgewater.) He was intellectual and bookish, and had been in the British Military Intelligence Service during the first World War. He was becoming quite bald, and said that barbers told him this was a result of wearing a helmet constantly during the war. My mother engaged him to tutor Dick and me in French; but he did much more than that — he took charge of us entirely. We went swimming together, and to the tennis matches, to Saint-Cloud to see the palaces of the kings, to cathedrals, and for

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walks in the Bois de Boulogne. I saw my first Davis Cup Match with him. Confident that we were in good hands, my mother was free to do as she wished during the day. She would leave us soon after *pétit déjeuner*. After lessons would come *déjeuner*, and then we would see Paris as the French children see it, not in taxis, but in *métros* and buses. One day we hired a car to take us to Rouen; in the French manner, the very process of hiring it became a major project. The Captain shopped for exactly the right kind of automobile; when he found it, he exhibited it for my mother's approval, discussed its fine points and appointments. We stood upon a typical French balcony looking down upon this huge, yellow, foreign model. The Captain was greatly impressed, and was pleased that my mother was satisfied. We left early in the morning, and forty miles out that car stopped forever. We finished the day in a Model T Ford that got us there and back, although not in the style the Captain had planned.

We had a French maid. Her name was Blanchette. She was young and very pretty, with black bobbed hair, and was married to a cobbler who had been crippled in the war. She spoke no English, and was one of the best cooks in Paris. Whenever I was in Paris during my years on the Continent I

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looked up Blanchette and kept in touch with her until I escaped from France and was condemned to death by Vichy — by proxy, I presume, for Adolf Schickelgruber of Berlin.

I met a good many persons in Paris on that first trip who were to play dramatic parts in a nightmare life later. Two of these were Jack Stockholm and his younger brother George, or "Jo-Jo" as he was known to us. They were sons of John Stockholm, manager of the Walkover Shoe Store. Born in Wales, Stockholm Senior had lived in Paris more than fifty years and was an old friend of my family's. His wife was French, and by a curious twist of French law his children, George and Jack, had the right to choose their nationality. Jack chose to be English and George decided to be French. George and I were of the same age. He became my playmate and guide as a child in Paris, and my friend and buddy there in later years.

I returned to Bridgewater that fall and entered the eighth grade with a different attitude, perhaps, from that of the rest of the class: I had been playing with French children all summer, and could speak some French — although not very well — yet within a few weeks we were doing the very things that all normal American kids do.

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I completed junior high school, and went on to Thayer Academy, a private preparatory school near by — and still failed to develop a curiosity about books. All I wanted to know about their contents was enough to get me by entrance examinations or college boards, ultimately to achieve a degree of Bachelor of Arts or something comparable. What I lacked in scholastic merit I tried to make up in geniality and friendship for my instructors, so that even when I did not get by, I think they were genuinely sorry to flunk me. Somebody, it seemed, was always tutoring me in something.

Leaving Thayer Academy, I was admitted to Phillips Exeter. But toward the close of a year there, our old friend Captain V. Delbos wrote from Biarritz that he had just established a school for boys there. As I had not done well at Phillips Exeter either, a summer school for boys at that time was just my dish. I was still having trouble with French; Biarritz would be an ideal place to learn more about it. I went alone, and felt very adult about it — but actually my father saw to it that all arrangements were foolproof. I was ticketed, guided, and met along the way by travel agents, who, in turn, were supervised by shoe company employees, and word

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about my progress was transmitted back to my father.

I was met in Paris by the Stockholms, and although I was due to arrive in Biarritz the next day, I decided to stay on in Paris for a week or more with Jack and Jo-Jo. Visiting their home was a German boy, a few years older than I. He had a small car and we became friends. We drove around Paris a good deal, and one day we went out to Soissons to the cemetery where my Uncle Willard was buried. We stopped, too, at another cemetery near by and I pointed out to him the black crosses of the German soldier dead. He was Helmut Haller; his father was in the steel business in Stuttgart; his path was to cross mine again under different circumstances.

There was too much happening in Biarritz and the surrounding French country and seaside for me to spend too much time studying French that summer. I could get by. That was enough. Technically, I was a student in Captain Delbos' School. Actually, I was enjoying a crowded and exciting vacation. I joined the tennis club and improved my game, made scores of friends, and was more certain than ever that France was the place for me. But when I got home that fall, I continued

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my preparation for college at Phillips Exeter. In scholastic standing at the end of that year I was only among those present, but I had managed to scrape by, and as a reward, perhaps, I was permitted to take a Mediterranean cruise.

In two years, I had been home only on occasional week ends and for short visits during Christmas and Easter vacations, and now I was about to set out on another trip abroad. It must be clear, by now, that I was taking college preparation very casually. I was eighteen years old and not yet in college; but I submit that I was typical of the average well-to-do student of the mid-thirties. There was no crying demand for us in business or in industry. The country was full of unemployed — of CWA, PWA, CCC; hundreds of thousands were on public welfare rolls. Reds and pinks and communistic cells were beginning to crop up in educational institutions, among teachers and students. Those of us who were in reasonably secure financial circumstances were in no hurry to get through school. School was far more attractive then than life outside of it. You got as much fun out of living as you could; if you flunked a subject, you took it over again without regret, fairly certain that you would pass the second time.

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The days when it was considered a disgrace to fail in a subject were gone. Some students made certain that they would fail, because it was more comfortable to linger on in school on an allowance than to rush out into a business that held no easily discernible future, or into a profession that was already overcrowded with starving practitioners. We did not have the goal or the incentive that the generations before us had had. Somebody dubbed us the "lost generation," although I didn't think we were then, and don't think so now. "Youth Movements" were beginning, and some who started in them then are still making a profession of it now in middle age. Critics of the democratic, capitalistic and economic systems sprouted everywhere. As far as I was concerned, the present system was perfectly swell, and I had no burning desire to reform anything. I knew that a time would finally come when I would have to buckle down to something; but since there was nothing that attracted me on the horizon, I decided to gather me rosebuds while I might. If the system was going to go to smash, at least I would taste the full flavor of its fruit while it lasted; and if it was not, then I would remain parked in a comfortable spot until opportunity got around to knocking. A year at Phillips Exeter was just another year at school

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for me, another interlude between trips abroad.

This time it was a planned and supervised tour on an Italian liner. I had a small, leather-tooled book with a flap and lock, "My Travel Memories," and looking through it now, seven years later, I find such notations as: "Met a Russian woman who is making the cruise. She came from Odessa. She had a bottle of Vodka, famous and notorious Russian drink, something like green whisky, and she treated me. This stuff costs $8 or $9 a bottle. In the evening, had a big celebration dinner with gay dancing, and fooling around on deck afterwards. Got to bed at 4."

Although it was the usual Cook's Tour, on it I unwittingly familiarized myself a little with a country that I was to come to know more intimately five years later. I went boating on the sluggish Nile River that year with a girl from the cruise ship, looking at the moon and the stars and saying the same things to the girl that every boy does under such circumstances. I was to remember this with a twinge when, unshaven and in dust-covered uniform, I stumbled into the Nile and scooped that dirty water up in a cup of my hands to slake a gnawing thirst, while to me it tasted like nectar.

When I got home that fall, there was a good

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deal of discussion, pointing to a definite conclusion that my careless days of free travel and exploration of distant places were now over, and that a time had come for me to tuck my passport among my souvenirs, put aside the gay knickers of boyhood, and buckle down to work. To emphasize this, I was transferred to Worcester Academy, and there the entire routine had a salutary, albeit temporary, effect upon my attitude and behavior. Also I had received the impression from both my father and mother that the picnic was over; that I was definitely expected to finish college before my hair turned gray. I was sincerely beginning to doubt my own ability to apply myself; but to prove that we were all wrong, I did take studies seriously for a term, in spite of the fact that the city of Worcester was handy with a variety of places to spend a pleasant hour or two. I went out for track and baseball and wound up as a cheer leader. My high scholastic standing was a revelation to me and a pleasant surprise to my parents. However, having proved that it could be done, I promptly lost interest. As a reward of merit that year, I saw America — went West to the Grand Canyon and California, and returned by the Southern route with my father. In September, I entered Columbia.

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Chapter Three

FOR two years I had been having a time for myself, winter sports and summer sports, the races, swimming pools, tennis courts, cocktail parties, teas, dances and week ends, halfway around the world, and otherwise a continuous ride on the merry-go-round. I thought I was an expert at escaping boredom and knew all the angles — until I arrived at Columbia. And then I found out that I was a rank amateur, practically a hick from the sticks. After I was enrolled in the college on Morningside Heights I met Jerry Mahoney and "Bud" Fowler, who pledged me for the Delta Upsilon Fraternity, and a whole new and exceedingly attractive vista spread out before me.

Jerry was a typical Irishman, about five feet nine inches tall and weighing about one hundred and forty pounds; he knew every political figure of importance for miles around. His father was a

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Tammany leader. "Bud" Fowler knew every night club and entertainer of importance in Manhattan, and almost before the ink was dry on my tuition receipt, we were Three Musketeers and I was swept into a genial, generous, happy-go-lucky crowd of New Yorkers who really knew how to go about the business of having fun — a circle, incidentally, to which the average unknown New England Yankee is seldom invited, and yet I felt as if I had been adopted, and can never repay them for being so kind to me.

I went out for track at Columbia that year, and trained at Leon and Eddie's, and never succeeded in breaking any records. To show me what a superior fraternity DU was, Jerry and Bud introduced me to New York. I moved into the DU fraternity house with them on 113th Street, and lived there for the rest of the term. I met Micheline Hardy at a dance there, and later met her father, Judge Lamar Hardy, and sat with them at Democratic Headquarters in the Hotel Biltmore listening to the election returns and later the speech by Jim Farley. When it was over, we went up to Farley's room. A foot-loose son of a traditional Republican family, I found myself perfectly at home in the camp of the enemy. Since that time, some of my best friends have been there. A group of English

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debs came over that year on a "good-will tour," and Columbia students were asked to volunteer as escorts. Jerry, Bud and I were there. Before that year was out, I think I can truthfully say that I knew every night-club doorman and head waiter in New York. I did all of my research and home work at such places as The Stork, 21, Bill's Gay Nineties, and Leon and Eddie's, and as a result, when the term ended, I thought it might be just as well for me to be on the high seas when my marks got home.

I booked passage on the *Normandie* and sailed for France. I did not beat the marks home, though. My parents were on hand at the boat to see me off.

I explained the whole situation to them then, and amplified it in a long letter written aboard ship. As I saw it, a good deal of money had now been spent on my education. My mother always had been of the opinion that I should know the French language well, and now I was ready to cut out all nonsense and seriously tackle the job of mastering the language. It had been argued, too, that I had a tendency to "lean," and I was determined to eradicate that by going it alone henceforth.

I had a half-hearted idea that I would continue

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my education at the Sorbonne, but that faded soon after I reached Paris. I was living, until I could get settled, with Jack Stockholm, whose wife and baby were at the beach, in Deauville. I took in the steeplechase and the ground drag. I still liked Paris. Sitting at a sidewalk table in front of the famous Café on the Rue de la Paix, sipping an apéritif, and watching the world go by, appealed to me as a comfortable, cheerful life. I liked the French people and their customs — their easy unhurried ways, their agreeable tolerance of the odd, and the feeling I always experienced when I went there. Paris was a man's town, either purposely or unintentionally planned for the complete satisfaction and enjoyment of men. I had good friends there, and I decided that I would quit college and stay there; that I would get a job, and a studio of my own.

If I had been poor and struggling, compelled to earn my way, my attitude and outlook might have been different. On the other hand, if I had been poor and struggling, I would not have been in Paris. Food, clothing and shelter had never been problems for me, and were not now. I had an invitation in my pocket from Helmut Haller to come to Stuttgart and spend six months as a guest at his house. Jack Stockholm would not hear of letting me be a paying guest at his house. I finally hired

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a one-room studio on a narrow, winding street of the Latin Quarter and began to haunt the American Chamber of Commerce and the American Embassy, two of the best clearinghouses for jobs.

It was not a good time to find one. Unemployment was widespread, and I had two serious handicaps: I spoke the language poorly, and I had no worker's card, a necessary little document almost impossible to get. One Friday morning, at the American Chamber of Commerce, I was tipped off that Cartier's, the international jewelry house, was looking for either an American or an English salesman to alternate between the Paris and Monte Carlo stores, working in Monte Carlo during the season, and in Paris the rest of the year. Qualifications were that he should be young, personable, able to wear tails well, make a good appearance. Preferably with a large acquaintance among Who's Who in England and America among visitors in Monte Carlo and Paris.

I thought I could fill most of these requirements, and as I had never been a shrinking violet, and always enjoyed getting around and meeting people, I could build up a wide acquaintanceship on short order. I went to Cartier's on the Rue de la Paix for an interview.

It was a hot and muggy morning, dreary and raining. I walked over quickly from the Place de

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la Concorde, in a borrowed raincoat, and when I arrived, my coat and hatbrim were dripping large globs. Cartier's was a highly dignified place that radiated swank. I tried to explain my mission to three elderly formally frocked Frenchmen in a back office, and although I spoke my best French, I might as well have been speaking Greek. They stared at me, bewildered and uncomprehending. A young, efficient girl secretary overheard me and brought me to the directors.

They were formidable in appearance. One was short and dark and grumpy-looking. The other was taller, dignified, clear-eyed and businesslike.

"So you want to work here?" the small one said, as though he defied me to admit it.

"That's right," I nodded. He had asked the question in English. I answered in English.

"Just another American who wants to play around for the summer," the tall one observed in French.

"To be perfectly frank with you — " I began.

"Yes, yes," the grumpy one interrupted. "By all means, be frank." This time he spoke in English.

"I like the cooking over here," I said.

"And our girls, too, I presume," Grumpy suggested.

"They're all right, too," I admitted.

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Sales resistance, I thought, is high, and this is going to be a job of selling from scratch. The approach to French businessmen is far different from the approach to American businessmen. "May I sit down?" I suggested.

They nodded.

"You want a salesman, and I am a salesman," I began. "I don't say that with vanity. I state it simply, and as a fact. Selling and business have been a tradition in my family in America for more than a century. I'm young, but I know I can sell jewelry. I already know many of the people you want an American or an English salesman to meet. You can check my background by cabling to New York, and there are a number of business references right here in Paris that I can give you."

This may not be the conversation verbatim, but it is the substance in summary. It took me fifteen minutes to arrive at a point that I cover here in a few paragraphs. You can't high-pressure Frenchmen. Selling yourself to them is a particularly slow, deliberate and painstaking process.

"If you are so capable, there must be opportunity for you in your own country," one of them protested. "Why don't you get a job there?"

"There is not the opportunity that is here," I reasoned. "We have an unemployment problem in

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the United States, too. There, I would be in competition with almost all of the population. Here I would be in competition only with other American salesmen selling jewelry, and I doubt that there is such competition. If there is, it isn't important. There are other American salesmen selling American products in France. They are successful, and I feel that I can be just as successful."

They thought it over. "Then this is not a transient job for you?" one of them asked.

I shook my head. "Of course not. This is a big opportunity for me. I would finally sell something, some place, anyway. I like the idea of selling jewelry. If you hire me, I will make a career of the jewelry business. You have a New York store, and some day, perhaps, you may transfer me there."

They looked at each other and the tall director turned to me. "Come back tomorrow," he said.

I got up to leave and he cautioned me: "You're not hired. I merely said, 'Come back tomorrow.' "

Early the following morning I was back in the store, again trying to explain my presence to the three men in the back office, when the tall director, M. Foret, walked in, and after the traditional handshake and "*Comment ça va?*" asked, "Can you go to Monte Carlo next week?"

I nodded.

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"Very well, you're engaged," he said. He had looked up my references and cabled New York. I went to work in the Paris store that morning, on three months' trial.

I had an idea that I would go right out on the floor and learn the business by trying to sell, and was promptly disillusioned. Technically, I was secretary to a *vendeur,* a professional jewelry salesman, assigned to assist him with his clients; and as secretary to a *vendeur,* I, in turn, had my own secretary, who took dictation from me in my poor French and, as she had no secretary, transcribed it into very good French, and I signed the letters. For this, I received five thousand francs a month to start.

Five days later, I was on my way to the Monte Carlo store with four others: two *vendeurs,* an American lady secretary, and the *garçon de magazin.* The *garçon,* the secretary and I had three million dollars' worth of jewels in our baggage in a first-class compartment, and we worried and fretted until it was finally placed in the vaults of a store a stone's-throw from the Casino.

Monte Carlo was beautiful then. Flowers were in bloom and I had a room in a hotel overlooking the water. The rising sun awakened me every

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morning, and I looked out upon red roofs with the blue Mediterranean in the background.

"This is the life," I thought; "and I'm getting paid for it."

Cartier's investigation of me was complete and took weeks. M. Cartier had taken a personal interest in me and planned to discuss my future with my father when both were next in New York. In the meantime, for all practical purposes, I was apprenticed to the *vendeur,* who was personal jeweler to the nobility of England, Hindu princes, and such royal families as could still afford to buy jewelry. My training was begun in the tradition of a house that sold to all existing crowned heads of Europe except Victor Emmanuel — it was said he couldn't buy from us because Mussolini wouldn't let him. The house may have been staid and dignified, but the brothers Cartier were alert nevertheless, and had their eyes on a number of developing accounts in America, which might become even more profitable than the title trade. As a prospective *vendeur* for Cartier, I was told that I had a position of some social importance and must live up to it. I must wear tails during evening hours, be seen in the right clubs and cocktail rooms, cultivate the right friends and be invited to the right homes.

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Such exquisite jewelry at such high prices is not sold by common tradesmen, and an account must be cultivated and nurtured as carefully and painstakingly as an orchid.

At first, I am afraid, I was a little overawed and smothered by all this dignity. It cramped my style in selling until I got back to the American idea: the hell with it, if the money is there, I'll make the sale. There are now a few *vendeurs* in the United States, driven from France after the collapse, who will throw up their hands in horror at my saying it so bluntly, but their approach was the chief difficulty French salesmen had in selling jewels to Americans. They did not need fancy verbal grill- and latticework clouding up a sale. If you had a jeweled piece, and they had the money, and they wanted it or you could make them want it, they bought it. *Finis.* I found the best way to get business was to go after it, and I tossed the approved French sales technique overboard, one day, when I dived from a pier in my bathing suit into the Mediterranean and swam out to the yacht of a millionaire steelmaker who was throwing a party. I joined the party, and two days later brought them to the store and outfitted them with wrist watches, bracelets, rings and pins. Some of my red-plush as-

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sociates called it "typically American," and characterized everything about it as "revolting" except the commission.

I tried to develop a sales technique that would appeal to Americans. Every *vendeur* in the store was always addressed as "Monsieur." I asked that I be called "Jack," neither "Monsieur Jack," nor "Jacques," but a short, hard Jack, and requested that American customers be turned over to me. When an American walked into the store, asked a question in English of a French salesman, and heard "Where's Jack?" his eyes brightened and I had two strikes on the sale even before I opened my mouth. French dilly-dallying, dawdling and adjourned conferences about a sale drove me frantic. I always wanted to get the name on the check, chalk up the commission and call it a day. In August, when I had been with the firm scarcely a month, I found it difficult to justify such odd practices as quitting business, closing up shop and barring everybody from the streets for the big races; and I was still too foreign to French politics to understand the concern of my employers and fellow *vendeurs* over a new government, and supposed it was because M. Bonnet, the Minister of Finance, was also Honorary President of the New York Cartier's. I had a lot to learn.

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I had certain rounds to make, clients on a prospect list that I must call upon. I would show stones, discuss them, try to make a sale, and if I found it impossible, I would leave the door to further discussion ajar, so that I might revive it at a later date. Selling stones was far different from selling other merchandise. You went to the client, the client did not come to you. Sometimes it took months to sell one stone, but that sale was enough to take care of the whole season.

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Chapter Four

MY immediate superiors were the directors, M. Foret and M. Farines, and on a really important sale in dollars that ran into four or five figures, I had to call them in to clinch the deal, whether I felt confident that I would be able to put it over or not. They were very patient with me and very helpful in the beginning, and later became my close friends. Both were in middle age, slender, athletic, with beginning gray at the temples. Both had been captains in the first World War, and they were genuinely fond of Americans. One had trained American airmen. He was in the army four-and-a-half years, served on every front, was wounded twice, and gas had affected his eyesight. The other had a wonderful time in California while on his way to Siberia. They were my companions every night at the Sporting Club, and they saw to it that I met the people that I ought to know. I

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was still studying French, trying hard to achieve an easy familiarity with the tongue. One of the directors got a book on precious stones for me from M. Cartier's private library. I had had trouble enough with the French language up to then, but studying precious stones in a French book floored me.

Any night at the Summer Club, I would find myself standing among a group of such guests as the Grand Duc Dimitri, who was much-talked-of as the man who helped kill Rasputin, the Maharajah de Kapurthala, who never played the roulette wheels, and Lady Bailey. (I saw her win three hundred and fifty thousand francs one night.) Winners were always surrounded by a knot of bankrupt princes and counts.

M. Foret gave me a *laissez-passer*, good anywhere in Monte Carlo, and began negotiations to get a worker's card for me, a difficult document for any foreigner to get at that time. As an introduction to the sale of high-priced jewelry, I was asked to be present at conferences designed to put over the big deal of the season. The office was trying to sell a diamond to Mrs. X for a lot of money. This one was a marvel. If the sale went through, it would take care of the season, and the purpose in having me present was to teach me to "think big," so that

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I could ultimately get around to regarding $250,000 as $2.50. I undertook an ambitious project to sell a valuable stone to Lady Y, but I was still a novice, got into deep water, and had to call in M. Foret and M. Farines to take over. For a time thereafter I restricted myself to the trade of elderly gentlemen who wanted to buy stones for pretty blondes.

There never was much possibility of losing a jewel, or having it stolen. Whenever an expensive object was shown, there was always a *garçon* along to keep his eyes on it from the moment it was uncovered until it was covered again. A *garçon,* however, was barred from exclusive clubs and *vendeurs* occasionally had to take over delivery unguarded. When Mrs. Z made a gift of gold suspenders to somebody or other, I had to look all over Monte Carlo for her, because she had specified a dead-line for delivery; I finally found her in the private gambling room of the Casino.

Cartier's, in Paris and Monte Carlo, was always stiffly correct in a business transaction, even to the solicitation. An invitation to visit the store had to be extended verbally, and under the proper, dignified auspices.

Late in August, I was dispatched in full formality to call upon Mr. and Mrs. W on their yacht,

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to present the compliments of the directors and invite the W's ashore to look over a few rare specimens. I went out there, went aboard, but they were not yet up. While waiting for them, I had a drink with the skipper of the yacht, and later found out that he was a British Member of Parliament. I tried to sell him, but I think the setting overpowered me: plush carpets, glittering fripperies, and Hollywood splendor made our diamonds look like cut glass. A few days later, I met a tourist in the Hotel de Paris bar. He knew an American who wanted to buy a gold cigarette case. It cost me fifteen dollars to get all the information I needed. I sold the prospect a cigarette case for 20,000 francs (about $800) and I sold him a diamond bracelet for his wife for 1600 pounds ($8000), and he sent me to a prospect who bought a gold cigarette lighter with a sapphire to match the case.

The summer season ended in Monte Carlo early in September, when we would close the store and return to Paris until the Christmas season, when we would return to Monte Carlo again. The upper-bracket *vendeurs* took their vacations, but I was new and remained on duty in the store. I was still trying to get a foothold and build up a clientele, and at the same time I was having trouble with the Ministry of Labor. Cartier's had got me a worker's

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card from the Principality of Monaco without much trouble; but in Paris it was quite a different problem. And there were other complications, like the bachelor's tax. I hired an apartment in Rueil for a thousand francs, or about forty dollars, a month.

It was in the Paris store that I got my first really big break. Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., practically handed me a client that Cartier's had been trying for years to land. He did it because I was an American, and it put me in solid. Fairbanks and Marlene Dietrich were in the city at the same time. He dropped in to buy a little knick-knack for her. He did not know me, but when he saw me in the store he recognized a fellow American, turned down all of the dignified French *vendeurs,* waved a friendly greeting to me and said "Hi," as though we had been chums since childhood. We shook hands. I introduced myself and we talked about baseball and politics back home. He made his purchase, did some quick thinking, and asked me to deliver it personally to Marlene at her hotel. I did, and invited her to come to the store to look over our merchandise, but she was reluctant and I could not persuade her.

The next day, Fairbanks came in again, made a few purchases to be delivered, and I brought them

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to his hotel. We chatted and I told him it would impress my new bosses if Marlene were to come into the store and ask for me, even if she bought nothing. He caught on quickly. He was packing, preparing to go to London; he left for London the following noon. But the next morning, Marlene came into the store and asked for me. She made a few purchases and left.

That was the clincher. French *vendeurs* and executives are not familiar with American colloquialisms. As far as they were concerned, every star in Hollywood knew me either personally or intimately. The other *vendeurs* shook their heads and clucked their tongues and said: "These Americans certainly do stick together." They did stick together, too, even in quixotic undertakings, later, that only Americans could attempt. I never saw a visiting American in a French store who would not seek out a resident American if he knew one was there, or would not pass by all others once he had sighted him. Actors and actresses passed the word around. People came in from New York with my name written in notebooks, and the office got the impression that I was known from coast to coast.

The Duke and Duchess of Windsor came to Paris, and the English, French and American popu-

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lations were all a-dither, each for a different reason. The Duke and the Duchess had been married in June at the Château de Candé, in Monts, the home of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Bedaux, before thirty-eight guests, all of them either regular or occasional clients of Cartier's. There were many Americans in Paris who were regular employees of the American Express and United States firms with branch offices, as well as a large sprinkling who were members of the Paris Post of the American Legion, soldiers who remained in Paris after the last war, married French wives, went into business and raised families. All these were indignant at what they considered the shabby treatment given the Duke and Duchess by Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin and the English generally. These Americans thought the Duchess should have had the title "Your Royal Highness," and I was one of them. The English in Paris were embarrassed, and the French were delighted to have these royal visitors under such romantic circumstances.

The Windsors fell within my jurisdiction because, although it had not been actually agreed, it had been understood that I would have first claim on the sale of jewelry to English or American clients or prospective clients. I don't know whether the directors were startled when they heard that I

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wanted to walk in where angels feared to tread, or whether they considered that I was an American from Bridgewater and that the Duchess was an American from Baltimore, and that I had already had some success with Americans. At any rate, whatever influenced them, I was given the opportunity. In the end, I think I got to know them as well, if not better, than any other salesman in the shop.

As soon as they were settled in the Hotel Meurice, the Duchess sent over some of her pieces of jewelry to be cleaned. I looked them over and found engraved on the backs "WALLIS FROM DAVID." A few of them surprised me, they were dated so far back. Leather goods, cuff links, tie pins, and knives came over, all with an "E" crest on them. On the inside of a sapphire-and-diamond ring was engraved in what looked like Edward's hand: "*W — really forever — D.*"

The Windsor account was the biggest and most important one in the store, and working on it was training and experience for me. I called upon them in their nine-room apartment at the Hotel Meurice, and found them to be a pleasant couple. The Duke talked most of the time, and knew just what he wanted. The Duchess spoke with a combination Southern drawl and Oxford accent. I showed her

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a necklace of diamonds and emeralds that we had gone to considerable expense to make up. Our designers had fashioned new crests; his an E and hers a W, and another with the W superimposed upon the E, all surmounted by crowns. The Duchess admitted that they were beautiful, but said that she didn't have the money, a response that dumbfounded me. They bought a few trinkets, and I was disappointed.

As the Duchess looked over the designs, the Duke sat in a chair by the window, reading. I replaced the jewelry in its cases, and looking down at the Duke, curious about the book that was absorbing him, I was surprised at the title: *Why Edward Abdicated*. I wondered why he should be interested in somebody else's account of why he did it.

The Duke and Duchess had been planning to visit America, but their visit was cancelled, and our negotiations for the further sale of jewelry were temporarily held up, because the American Federation of Labor was aroused over Charles Bedaux. The inventor of a speed-up and stretch-out system universally opposed by labor, he was also arranging the royal trip. After the excitement subsided, we created for the Duchess a diamond necklace that fitted snugly to the neck and had flowerlike leaves

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in front. That item set the Windsors back quite a lot. We made a watch for the Duke that was domino black on one side, with a small timepiece in the center, and on each side a crown with crystals.

When my work on the account was finished, I returned to the store to meet and serve customers. A typical Frenchman with a black beard came in. He looked like an easy sale. I asked him in my best French if I could show him something. He looked me over. His eyes crinkled, and he asked me if I knew how to get to Back Bay Station.

"That sounds like home to me," I said.

He smiled. "I like in Boston," he said, but I rang up no sale on the register.

In October of 1937, we had our first war scare. Mussolini had made a state visit to the Reich and had been given a tumultuous reception, and conversations between the Duce and Hitler were under way. It was then that I first discovered that international affairs and conversations between a couple of dictators meant something very definite and personal to me.

The franc began jumping around, and I was being paid in francs. Food prices began to climb, but salaries remained the same. Business houses, like

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Cartier's, lost confidence in the franc, and turned their goods into pounds and dollars, making matters worse. On the first of September, 440 English pounds was 58,500 francs. On the thirtieth it was 65,400 francs, which made quite a difference when you were selling jewelry. For the first time, I looked across the Maginot and Siegfried lines, saying: "Hey, what goes on here?" I was no economist, but it was perfectly clear to me that something had soured. Before I knew it, I was getting less money in francs than I would have if I were back home in the States on the WPA — and I had expensive tastes.

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Chapter Five

FOREIGN affairs and women clients began to take up a good deal of my time and attention. I met a woman from the *New York Times* in Fred Payne's bar one night, just one of those transient faces that float in and out of your vision in the course of a life, and she told me I was living in a fool's paradise. She was picking apart Hitler, Mussolini and Japan, and tying them up in a nice little package with the American veto on the Duke and Duchess of Windsor. She explained everything in detail, and I answered "Nuts!" Since then, almost everything she predicted has happened.

I had found out that I could promote a good deal of business among the girls in the Casino de Paris and the Folies Bergère. They were nice girls, and my favorite was an Australian. They used up boy friends almost as fast as they used up silk stockings, and they wore boy friends and stockings

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only as long as they lasted. They'd bring the boy friends around and buy fancy items, and the next day they'd be back and offer to sell me the jewelry at as low as half-price. But Cartier's was not in that kind of business. Once the jewelry was sold, it stayed sold. Whenever it was possible I steered them to something not too expensive and somewhat useful. If they wanted to sell it outside, that was their business. The Australian and a few others were smart. They bought unset stones and valuable gems, and put them away in safe-deposit boxes. I developed, too, as many tipsters as a newspaper columnist; and put concierges, valets, maids and hotel help on my personal payroll, to let me know immediately when guests who looked like ready money checked in.

Business was brisk that year, until I went to Monte Carlo with the rest of the staff for the season, when again rumors of war were in the air, and good prospects suddenly became tight-fisted. I was showing jewelry until eleven o'clock at night and getting nowhere fast. The directors thought the trouble must be with my French. They picked out for me a nice little French girl, who spoke no English; but that didn't work either. The franc had been sinking, but revived and got better. The Government got worse. I got sick, and for a couple of

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days the directors of the company were dosing me with pills.

The King of Sweden came to Monte Carlo, but as a prospect for jewelry he was hopeless. He is the only person I ever saw who was said to have a system that would really beat roulette; if he had wanted it to, it could, if used as stated, have broken the bank. A King can do no wrong, even in the gaming rooms of Monte Carlo. And this was the story: when the King placed a few chips on a number, he swept up everything on the board whether he won or not, and a croupier would not lift a hand to restrain him. Actual winners were of course paid off just the same. It should be said, though, that this story went on that he didn't do this very often, and when he did, it was usually for pin money and not to pay off the national debt.

Of all the personalities in the gaming rooms, the King was perhaps the most amusing. He came every winter to watch and participate in the many tennis tournaments. For a man of eighty, he had remarkable agility and was able to stay up at parties until midnight, and play a few sets of tennis the next morning. His tall, thin figure was a familiar one at the Country Club, usually with his hat tipped over his eyes and a cigarette in a long holder, sitting around with his long, lanky legs crossed. He

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accepted invitations to parties over the phone, agreed to all arrangements, and then, often as an afterthought, asked who was extending the invitation.

Superstition was the other King in the rooms. People played the number of a hymn in church, the day of the month, the number of courtesy salutes given to a battleship coming into the harbor, or the number of lamp posts between the hotel and the Casino. An elderly lady once bought a small clip from me, counted the number of diamonds in it, played that number and won — that time. It was the general belief that Zero would come up on the middle table at exactly seven o'clock on Sunday night. I saw it happen several times, but I saw 11 come up at seven o'clock more often. One of the standard routines was to stop losers from climbing over the banister to jump, and an ambulance was commonplace at the door.

Before the Easter Holidays in 1938, I got a letter from Helmut Haller in Stuttgart. "I want you to come to Germany," he wrote, in the stilted English of a German student who accommodates German script to American penmanship, "to look at what our great Mr. Hitler has done for us, so you will always find a place in Stuttgart. I invite you

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to come to pass your holidays here. I do not know if the business is wrotten or if you have the money, but here in Germany you will not need a penny. You will be like my brother."

I thought Stuttgart was as good a place as any to spend the holidays and accepted the invitation. On the edge of the Black Forest, about twenty-five miles from Munich, the town is built on the side of a mountain, a naturally pretty spot except that the smokestacks of the Haller steel works were reared in the valley to cloud it with soot. Helmut lived in the highest house on a hillside overlooking the valley, a big place with a gravel drive, three-car garage, a house of many rooms and a large staff of servants. The Hallers had the best of everything and no trouble getting it. Neither fancy food nor gasoline was rationed to them, and Helmut and I sped around the countryside in his car.

I went to a concert with him one night, and before it began I turned to him and said: "Am I expected to *heil* Hitler?"

He shrugged his shoulders. "If you don't," he said, "you will make yourself conspicuous."

I thought it over. "If I don't, I will make you conspicuous, too," I said.

He nodded. "That would naturally follow," he said.

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It was an awkward spot to be on. I despised what Hitler stood for, and yet Helmut was my friend, and I was his guest. I reasoned that it would be unfair for me to call unfavorable attention to him. When the crowd dutifully stood and chorused "*Heil Hitler!*" I raised my hand with palm outward and fingers crossed, and kept my mouth closed. I have thought of that ridiculous episode often.

The Haller plants were turning out heavy guns, gun barrels and armaments; and the greatest disappointment to the Hallers, while I was there, was their inability to get their money out of Stuttgart and into Switzerland. The Government forbade it. They were anxious to invest it in Anaconda and United Nickel. I returned to Paris with my thoughts and attitude greatly sobered. I decided that henceforth I would pay much closer attention to the international picture.

I had five weeks' vacation coming to me, and decided to go back to the United States to look around, and spend a little time in Bridgewater. I missed the *Normandie* but arranged to sail on the *Champlain;* and as I was about to board, I was temporarily defeated by the very virus that ultimately led to the fall of France. Looking on at the preparations for sailing, I saw hundreds of men

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leave the boat by the crew gangplank, and at sailing time it was announced that departure would be delayed because of a crew strike. I had dinner at a near-by hotel and returned at ten, expecting to sail at midnight; I found the *Lafayette* ablaze, berthed next to the *Champlain,* and sinking. The *Champlain* was moved to safety and a guard of policemen and firemen was thrown about it. The next morning I was told that the ship would not sail, and returned to Paris to make other arrangements. I finally sailed on a German boat from Cherbourg.

New York looked good to me. My parents and my brother, Dick, were at the pier to meet me. New England was even better, and for a couple of weeks I was happy in Bridgewater; then I became restless, anxious to get back to Paris again. The vacation at home was a short interlude. Before long I was on the *Queen Mary* on my way back to France.

Lyricists have sung about "Paris in the Spring," and wisecracks have been made about it, all for good reason. Paris changes so completely in the spring, and becomes so peaceful. The funny little streets do not smell as much; old buildings are clean in the sun and no longer moldy; girls blossom in color and new fashions. This time I went

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to Montmartre to live, and found a more pleasant room, in the Rue Pigalle, where I had more congenial company: showgirls from Paris clubs. Most of them were English; a few were French; they came into my room at night after their shows to have a highball or cocktail, and to smoke and talk. Whether I was in bed or not made no difference. We were all in Paris, and most of us did not know why or how the others got there. Only in Paris could things like that be so casual. They introduced me to their particular friend, Father Carew, an American minister who spread the gospel without scripture reading, prayers or sermons. Beautiful girls of all religions, from England, Australia and America, came to him and his wife for comfort, advice and help. A real Christian, his door was always open and he saved many of them. My next Christmas I spent with them in his hostel in front of the Opéra Comique.

By now I was a reasonably permanent resident of France.

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Chapter Six

IN Paris, during the summer of 1938, two events are associated and coupled together in my mind: the visit of the King and Queen of England, which did not come off immediately, and the visit of Judge Lamar Hardy and his daughter Micheline, which did. The King and Queen were coming to bolster morale, a gesture of friendship in time of crisis, to show the people of France how England felt. Judge Hardy was searching out leads in a German spy trial then being held in New York, and receiving considerable newspaper attention there.

Beginning late in June, Paris began to dress up for the arrival of the King and Queen. War fever tapered off. Everything was going to be all right. What were we worrying about? Germany and Italy had been putting on spectacular shows for each visiting dictator, and we were going to show them what a state visit was like when it was put on right.

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We were going to set Mussolini and Hitler right back on their heels and put these upstarts in their places.

Paris was decorated with gay, bright colors, flags, flowers, and even musical fountains. Once again, tourists were pouring into the city. Prospects were brighter, and everything was set for a summer financial clean-up, but when the royal visit was postponed, tourists melted from the city like snow in the summer sun, and gloom descended again. All of the business we had expected evaporated with them.

The bright spot for me, personally, though, was the arrival of Judge Hardy and his daughter, my old and good friends from New York. I had no thought of business in my mind as far as they were concerned. I wouldn't sell them anything. In fact, when they got to Paris, I was so glad to see them that I would have given them the store. They were met when they arrived on the boat train at the Gare Saint-Lazare by a score of newspapermen, foreign correspondents of American newspapers who wanted to know all about the investigation, and where the Judge thought it would lead him. When he had disposed of them, we three stepped into a cab and went to the Crillon. For the next two weeks, Micheline and I did the town from the

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Casino to the Louvre, and at night, when the Judge could break away from prefects, gendarmes, courts and criminal records, he joined us.

I had been with French people for a long time then, and I had a thoroughly French attitude toward the war. I was so exasperated by the attitude back home that I was ready to give up my American citizenship and go French entirely. When I told that to the Judge, he nodded his head understandingly, tapped me on the shoulder, pursed his lips and shook his head, "No." Later, I decided that the Judge was sage and wise, and I did not do it. When they left, I felt more alone than I ever had before. Guita and I walked up to Sacré Cœur, and looked down upon the city. I knew a time was coming when I must make a decision that would be vital to me.

In mid-July, it was announced that the King and Queen of England were coming after all. The flags and bunting and decorations were broken out again. Paris dressed up for a five-day celebration that began with block parties in the streets on Friday night, but another one of those dizzy assignments came through from London, and Farines and I set out on Saturday morning for Vichy and the château region to unload a ruby ring for $100,000; two pearl necklaces, one at 27,000 pounds (or

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$135,000 at prevailing exchange rates) and another for $215,000. Farines sold all three. The curious thing about it, to me, was that there were still people around with that kind of money.

I came back to Paris to find the city jammed for the visit of the King and Queen. Flags of the two nations were waving everywhere: from the Rond Point, the Place Vendome and Porte Maillot; banners in French and English: "God Save the King and Queen," "Welcome Their Majesties." From all accounts it was to be the biggest thing that ever happened in Paris. Old-timers said the Armistice could not compare with it. The visit of Edward VII, they said, was great, but nothing like this. Stores and streets for hundreds of miles were festooned. Newspapers had banner headlines that proclaimed Anglo-French friendship and peace.

We thought of it all then as the greatest event in modern European history, and told each other that it had the Rome-Berlin show beat a mile. It did not occur to any of us that we were not fighting wars with celebrations, or that the side that had the most spectacular public theater would not necessarily win. For three days it was a diplomatic and Parliamentary carnival. But when the debris was cleared away, the *vendeurs* in Cartier's were back selling cuff links and studs and looking across

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the border again at Germany. Diamonds and sapphires, and champagne with those who bought them, were fine; but the threat of war was a load upon our shoulders.

Paris did not grow calm until the flags and bunting came down. Cartier's opened a new branch in Cannes, at 59 Boulevard de la Croisette, that year, and I went there from London with $3,000,000 worth of stones in my grip to stock the store, and a revolver in my pocket to protect it. I had a reasonably good season there. The Joseph P. Kennedys were at Cannes, Henry Morgenthau and family, Marlene Dietrich, and Annabella. The place was full of the names that make news, and some were lavish spenders.

A man whose face was vaguely familiar to me walked into the store one day, looked around for an American face, saw me, and walked over.

"Are you an American?" he asked.

"I certainly am," I answered.

"Do you know Jack Benny?" he asked me.

I shook my head. "I know of him, but I've never met him."

"What in hell can you buy for a guy like that?" he asked.

I forget what I showed him, but he walked out with the purchase. He was Don Ameche, at that

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time taking a vacation from the Chase and Sanborn hour.

September of 1938 was a jittery month throughout all of France. Early in the month the French Government ordered the army to take over the Mediterranean Port of Marseilles, a control point for communications with a North African reservoir of troops and raw materials for war. Hitler told the Nuremberg Conference that Germany had a good harvest, and had stored enough food reserves so that the German people could forget forever the fear of economic blockade, and said he was prepared to capitulate to no one. There were outbreaks in the Sudeten German districts of Czechoslovakia, and on September 15, Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain went to Berchtesgaden for a conference with Hitler. He returned to England, reported to the King and to the Cabinet, and the situation grew steadily worse. Czechoslovakia was mobilizing and a few days later Premier Edouard Daladier flew to London to confer with Prime Minister Chamberlain. Chamberlain and Daladier agreed to support Hitler. Cabinets met and negotiations dragged out until armed invasion of Czechoslovakia was threatened. On the twenty-third, Chamberlain flew to Hitler, and for a time

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it looked as if they could not agree. President Roosevelt sent cables to Hitler, Chamberlain, Daladier, and to President Beneš, appeals based on the Kellogg-Briand pact, asking that negotiations be not broken off.

The effect of these events in Cartier's, as well as in other commercial and industrial establishments, was to disrupt business. The season was ending in Cannes in late September. We closed the store and I left to return to Paris, with about $2,000,000 worth of jewels. Arriving in Paris, I went to the store. All employees had been ordered to be on the alert twenty-four hours a day, ready to pack jewels for hiding at a moment's notice.

Paris was now a military center, jammed with men in uniform, young soldiers and veterans. The Maginot Line was being reinforced, and war became more and more real. France was mobilizing fast. Four of Cartier's staff left us, and I stood in line for a time at the Gare de l'Est and saw trains, passenger cars and boxcars, crowded with men in uniform, horses, tanks, guns, cannon, leaving for the front or for the East.

Women were crying, and soldiers were either angry or bitter. There was a good deal of drunkenness both among veterans and young soldiers. A few of these called from car windows "Come on,

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Pal. We're on our way to Berlin." A sudden transformation had come over Paris within a few hectic days. Dim blue lights replaced white ones on the city streets. Sandbags appeared outside banks and public buildings and at underground entrances. These were the first transient hints of the wartime Paris that was to come a full year later.

Gas masks were distributed in the store. The Embassy was warning Americans to leave France. Everybody in Paris had the jitters. Any loud noise, like a back-firing automobile, made people jump. Sirens were installed for air-raid warnings, and business came to a standstill. Our clients were bringing jewelry back and asking us to send it out of the country. All transactions between the branches in London and Paris, and Paris and New York, were suspended. Nothing could be shipped out of France and orders were cancelled indefinitely.

The time had arrived when I must make my decision. Guita and I walked up the hill to Sacré Cœur, where I could think it out.

France had been friendly and good to me. It had given me an opportunity and permitted me to make money at a time when men like me were frustrated back home. If they were financially independent, life had been futile for them during

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the depression, and after college each, with few exceptions, had come upon a blank wall. If they were not financially independent, they were in the CCC or on the WPA or on public welfare. Paris had entertained me, amused me, and provided me with charming companions. I felt that I owed a greater obligation to France, at that moment, than I did to the United States.

I had read English and American editorials, followed the American columnists and radio commentators. Some of them were seasoned in France and on the Continent, and others made flying trips, then and later, skimmed the surface, talked to a half-dozen bigwigs and immediately became the greater experts. I made no pretense of being a twelve-cylinder intellect. I was not particularly interested in the profound causes of war. All I knew was that I hated Mussolini and Hitler, just as almost all Frenchmen did, with a hatred that made me sick to my stomach. Like those tough, rugged members of the Paris Post of the American Legion, and the score of American salesmen in Paris I met every week, who also were not twelve-cylinder intellects or armchair Napoleons, I wanted to get a crack at the dictators. And from the way Senator Wheeler and Charles Lindbergh were sounding off back home, I felt that if I went back to the United States

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and waited to get a belt at dictators as an American soldier, I would probably have gray hair and white whiskers before the chance came. I had been getting letters from Bridgewater inquiring what I intended to do if war came. I came down from the hill that night and wrote home that come war or peace, I was staying in France.

I look back on those days and wonder how I ever could have arrived at some of the opinions and conclusions I held. At that time, I actually approved of those two meetings between Chamberlain and Hitler. Like most of France, I was sure that there would be a revolution and civil war in Germany; that the German people would stand for Hitler so far and no further. I thought Chamberlain had done a great piece of work, a master stroke of diplomacy, and in American papers headlines like *FRANCE AND ENGLAND DESERT THE CZECHS* made me mad. This, I was sure, was peace in our time. Pierre Cartier greeted the Munich agreement with a nod of satisfaction. "That fool" — he nodded toward a vague German border — "has wrecked business now for six weeks." And the implication was that we could now go back to work and forget about war.

Within a few weeks, business as usual had returned. Blue street-lights were replaced with bright

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white again. The trenches in and around the city were filled in. Bus and train schedules went back to normal. Sandbags were carted away. Demobilization began, and soldiers poured back into Paris. Everybody breathed a sigh of relief and said: "It's over," but I think we knew we were kidding ourselves.

From the beginning of 1939, France was not the gay, carefree land of geese laying golden eggs. Early in March the war outlook was bad again, and got worse. We were arriving at the conclusion that war would have to come. We reasoned that the English and French were ready, and that ultimately the United States would take a hand. I tried to follow the moves in *Le Temps, Paris Soir, Le Matin* and the Paris edition of the *New York Herald,* but the picture was confusing.

Business slumped and became worse than I had ever seen it. Monte Carlo was almost empty. Gambling rooms were deserted. Because the Italian border was so close there was plenty of excitement. Italians were going back to Italy and agitators were shouting "*Vive Il Duce!*" all over the place.

In mid-March I was in the Swiss Alps, skiing and skating. It was quiet and calm there, although ridges were fortified with antiaircraft guns. Across the border, in France, three classes had been mo-

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bilized, and all of the unemployed were being herded into munitions factories. When I got back, Marshal Hermann Goering was in Monte Carlo, and there was quite a bit of excitement. There was some fear that he might be shot. He came in from San Remo with a woman who was said to be his wife, passed up all the French dealers and *vendeurs* and bought a bracelet from a Jewish jeweler at a fancy price. Already German soldiers were mobilizing on the French frontier. An English battleship was anchored off Monte Carlo, and more were reported on their way to Nice. War was the sole subject of conversation. Around Easter time, Spanish refugees were filling the Southern concentration camps, and Americans in France were either indignant or fighting mad. Wherever Americans gathered there was a good deal of shouting about human rights, and some were ready to enlist in any army that would fight the dictators.

This situation went from bad to worse. In April, I found myself in Menton at three o'clock one morning and saw hundreds of soldiers in steel helmets on the march, and all bridges were guarded on the border. Back in Monte Carlo, Frenchmen and American residents were drinking more liquor than usual and asking each other: "Where are the English and French fleets?" All leaves had now

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been canceled, and mobilization, which had been going on slowly, was suddenly stepped up. Once again, the employees of Cartier's gathered at the vaults, and another batch of unset stones went into hiding. The feeling against the Germans and Italians was more bitter in Monte Carlo and Southern France, then, than it was in Paris — chiefly because all of us there saw more of the Spanish refugees and we knew, much more intimately, about the miserable victory for Italians and Germans in beating up a courageous and undrilled band that was never an army. French troops could have won that war within a year, and if help had been given to the Republicans, Franco would never have emerged as a figure on the world stage.

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Chapter Seven

MY mother came to France in June 1939, lived at my apartment in Paris for several weeks, and later hired a villa in Deauville, and although I continued working at Cartier's, we saw a good deal of each other. We went to Paris often, sat around the cafés, went to the theaters and saw the best shows. It was still a Paris of laughter, gaiety and fun, although the overtones of war were gathering and beginning to rumble. Over week ends, we visited my French friends or went for long drives into the country through calm and peaceful villages. On a warm July afternoon, we rode over bumpy roads in my open roadster to Soissons where, although I was prepared for it and anticipated it, I always seemed to come upon those marble crosses, row on row, so abruptly.

My mother and I stood beside a cross on Grave 5, Row 26, Section D, and again read the inscription:

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"WILLARD H. HASEY, 1ST LIEUTENANT, 1ST DIVISION, COMPANY E, OHIO, July 18, 1918."

He was then a young man not much older than myself, and he had taken the same road out of Paris twenty-one years earlier. We thought of Willard and I thought of myself, and I knew that my mother felt the same apprehension; another world upheaval, another war. That war did not make the world safe for Democracy. Was it my destiny to pick up a cold, wasted torch that Willard had dropped twenty-one years ago and carry it through another crusade? We were silent and thoughtful on the way back. We hoped war would not come, but if it came, I knew I would go. The sun was setting over reddish yellow hills as we approached Paris. We were in quiet, peaceful country, then rolled into a noisy, peaceful city, where subways rumbled and taxi horns peeped.

I had been sent by Cartier's to assist in opening a new branch-store in Deauville, and went there with Gerard Desouche and Jacques Guyot. Desouche was about thirty-five years old, a blond, and very nice-looking. Guyot was a few years older than I, about twenty-eight, suave, confident and a good salesman. It was a comfortable assignment for me because I could live with my mother there; but during July and August, as tension between

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the Democracies and the Axis intensified, business sickened slowly. Fewer customers came into the store and prospects who might be developed in bars, clubs, and hotels evaporated.

My mother left France on the *Normandie* on August 23, and neither of us could know that this was to be the last peacetime voyage of the liner. We were not as gay and cheerful at that parting as we usually were at sailing parties. I was cautioned to write frequently, promised to do so, and returned to Deauville lonely and depressed. Mobilization had been stepped up. Desouche and Guyot were called up. Hitler was now threatening Poland, and the threats had a more genuine ring than the usual sound of saber-rattling. I had had a final drink with Gerard Desouche; I never saw him again.

A few days after my mother left, I was ordered by Cartier's in Paris to hide the stock of jewels and stones, and did so. I hope they are still safe, and have every reason to believe that they are. I returned to Paris on the twenty-fifth. Once again the city was readying for war. I felt like saying "This is where I came in." I looked on at the same sights and scenes I had witnessed before; blue street lights that antedated blackouts, sandbags piled outside buildings, trenches in the parks and streets, crowded trains and freight cars and uniforms

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everywhere. But this time it was too purposeful and grim to be the usual war scare or dress rehearsal. Everybody knew that France was going to war. Almost every Frenchman I knew had been called up. M. Farines, the Cartier's director, who had been almost a godfather to me, fifty-four years old and a reserve officer, had already gone. Except for uniformed men, Paris seemed to be filled with old men and children, and a few Americans.

I went around to bars and clubs and cocktail lounges, to the American Express and the American Legion, and heard nothing but the conversational din of war. Everybody was cocky and confident. The Maginot Line was impregnable, and this time we would take the offensive at the outset and knock Germany out on her feet. It seemed so reasonable and believable then. It was just one of those things, and there was nothing to it. I actually believed that, and if anybody had given me a contrary opinion, I would have snubbed him as a traitor and fifth columnist. I decided that the time had now come for me to join up, and that the proper outfit was the Foreign Legion, where service would not be confined to an air-conditioned fortress with hot and cold running water and elevators. The Foreign Legion would be going to Africa or the Middle East, and I did not want to fight a war on one spot.

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Guita had been doing a show in Biarritz, but show business stopped as suddenly as the jewelry business. Showgirls were straggling back from the Provinces in the traditional manner of troupes stranded on the road. American and English salesmen in France were being advised by their embassies to go home. Guita looked me up immediately and I told her that I was going to enlist. No explanations were necessary. We had already covered that ground thoroughly. Together, we had what we thought was one final fling at Paris . . . but it did not work out that way.

It was my original intention to sign up with any outfit where there would be other Americans. Harry's New York Bar and Fred Payne's were clearinghouses for information to all Americans in Paris. All you had to do to publish a thing quickly to Americans was to announce it there, and the message would be given to every American who came in. I learned at these places that Colonel Charles Sweeny, a member of the Lafayette Escadrille in the last war, was recruiting Americans for a national group in the Foreign Legion. Sweeny, a soldier of fortune who served in the Foreign Legion after the last war, had an office at 71 Rue Saint Dominique, and it was understood that all Americans would be in the same regiment. I went to

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Sweeny's headquarters, and was directed to the Foreign Legion barracks. There, I found hundreds of applicants of all nationalities, among them a large number of Americans. The line extended down the stairs and along the street. American Negroes and Africans in line were hard to distinguish, although American Negroes in France generally are classified as Indians. I waited an hour or more for my interview and discovered Sweeny to be in his mid-fifties, about six feet tall, weighing about 165 pounds. He was crisp and businesslike, glad to have me in his infantry brigade. I left my name and address with him, and was told that if war broke out I would be called.

I was disappointed. I had expected to leave Paris that day in a uniform, and now I returned to Guita, said "Hello" again, and we continued to paint the town red.

On Friday, September 1, Hitler marched into Poland. On Saturday general mobilization was ordered, and the Paris Edition of the *New York Herald* headlined it *THERE GOES FRANCE* — a cry that was taken up by all Americans.

On Sunday, war was declared. I was in the country visiting the Stockholms and heard the King's broadcast. I returned to Paris, was called up on Wednesday, and went to the Bastille garrison for

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a physical examination. There were hundreds of applicants there, and I took my place in line with them, all of us naked and standing on a stone floor in a big armory waiting. Several doctors looked me over, chiefly for heart, lungs, leg and chest muscles. I was passed, accepted, and told to report again the following day.

The next day I was outfitted in the uniform of the Foreign Legion, and garrisoned temporarily at the Bastille among a transient, changing group of hundreds. There were other Americans in the regiment; but, as we were in uniform and all looked alike, it would take time for Americans to search each other out, and I saw no familiar faces. For five days in the Bastille, our routine was finding different ways of doing nothing. Training had not begun and we were getting bored. Rations were fair, and I had a straw mattress to sleep on.

We were shipped in a transport train of 40-and-8 cars to a camp of the Foreign Legion outside Lyons, for preliminary training, but the day after I arrived, I was called before the officer in charge, a typical French soldier, about forty years old.

"Nationality?" he asked, looking at my record.

"American," I answered.

He shook his head. "Americans cannot serve in

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the French fighting forces because of arrangements that have been made," he said.

"What arrangements?" I asked.

"That's all I can tell you," he said. "You will return to Paris and turn in your uniform at the Bastille."

Back in Paris I learned that the neutrality law had been interpreted through diplomatic channels to bar Americans from all combat units. I reported back to Colonel Sweeny and he told me to leave my Paris address; that I would be called again if circumstances made me available.

Ambulance driving was not combat service. The Paris Post of the American Legion was forming an ambulance corps. I went to the Post rooms and volunteered, and prospects looked bright until the American Legion in convention at Cleveland vetoed this idea, and the Paris Post's arrangements were modified. Some of the more militant members were determined to carry on, and organized the American Volunteer Ambulance Corps. There on the ground, they felt that the Legion in America was temporarily behind the parade and would catch up, sooner or later.

I met Steel Powers, an American whose father headed the Coca-Cola Company in France, in Harry's New York Bar. We thought there were

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enough Americans in Paris to finance, support and staff an ambulance corps. There were American doctors and dentists, salesmen, mechanics, clerks, a sizable staff at the American Express, all working in Paris, and some of them had money. There were, probably, twoscore active men between the ages of twenty-five and fifty who could drive ambulances. Steel Powers' mother had a château outside Paris, in Ville d'Avray, and she was willing to let us have it for headquarters. We left word at Harry's and Fred Payne's, asking all interested Americans to look us up. Almost the first to do so were newspapermen, among them Gene Graffis, a cameraman, and Stewart Ferguson, both of Acme Service. A story appeared in the Paris Edition of the *New York Herald*. Other foreign correspondents picked it up. Stories were printed in England and Sweden, and very soon we had forty-three Americans, thirty from Paris proper, the rest from outside Paris, and Americans were coming over from England and down from Sweden to join us.

Powers and I pooled all of our resources, sold everything we had of value, including my automobile, and tried to raise a fund by asking all Americans in Paris for contributions, but we had little success. American residents, it appeared, were not

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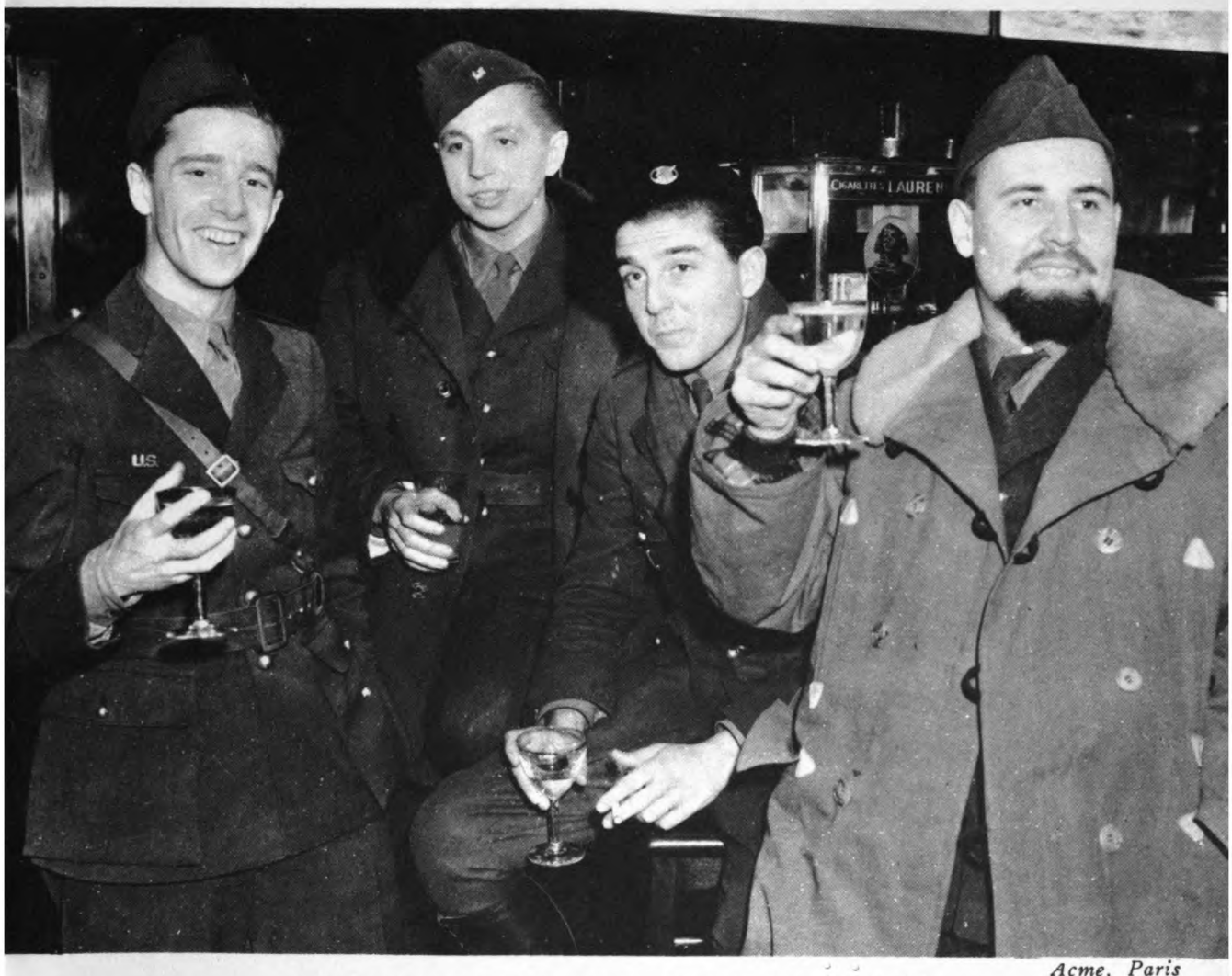
Acme, Paris

TRAINING NEAR PARIS



Acme, Paris

OFF TO FINLAND FROM PARIS

Ambulance Drivers Hasey, Bartlett, Newman, Mock

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yet aroused to the point where they would contribute. Nevertheless, within a few weeks we had assembled a corps of about thirty-eight at Ville d'Avray. We turned the place into a barracks, and members of Paris Post, American Legion, among them Sammy Owens and Jack Beauvis, undertook to train us, teach discipline, and to give us a smattering of knowledge of military formations, company records and paperwork. We adopted, voluntarily, a complete army routine — a small, orphan company of men in an army pattern, owing allegiance only to the United States of America. We did not know even what to call the organization. I wanted to call it the Huron Ambulance Corps, after the Huron Club of my childhood in Bridgewater, but Huron pronounced in French sounds like a rude, audible yawn. Huron, though, suggested an American Indian name, and we finally settled upon the "Iroquois Ambulance Corps."

Cartier's made up for us what was, perhaps, the most beautiful and expensive insignia ever worn by any military unit: Iroquois Indian heads of plated silver. We had insignia, uniforms, a barracks so elaborate that we had to black out the skylights and drain the swimming pool, and a fine drill-field — but we had no ambulances. Lack of financing was beginning to plague us. Cookie Eddie Wiggins

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of Chicago was having trouble getting food. All of my money had gone into the corps, with that of Steel Powers and the varied contributions of the members of the corps. We needed sponsorship and financial backing and there were only two places where we might find it: The American Field Service, active during the last World War, or the American Volunteer Ambulance Corps. The Field Service had been disbanded and was now reorganizing.

The American Legion had 150 truck frames, and two ambulance bodies on requisition from the French Government, and these had been turned over to the American Volunteer Ambulance Corps, under Colonel James Sparks, an American Legionnaire resident of Paris. The AVAC had equipment and no drivers. We had drivers and no equipment. We had hoped to be able to carry on ourselves, but finally surrendered to the inevitable. The corps met in the big hall of the château, discussed it, and I was assigned to interview Colonel Sparks. Powers was instructed to talk to officials of the American Field Service.

The American Field Service told Powers that they would not be able to get ambulances until spring. Colonel Sparks told me that the two ambulance bodies and two frames had been assembled

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in a garage outside Paris, and were now ready for service. I asked him if he would be willing to accept the members of our Corps in his organization, and he agreed to do so. I returned to Château de la Ronce at Ville d'Avray, reported to the corps, and it was voted that we join the AVAC.

Understandable differences of opinion arose almost immediately. Newspapermen, skeptical of us at first, became our best friends when they concluded that we were serious. They had cabled stories about our Iroquois unit to the United States, and perhaps some resentment was due to the fact that Iroquois and not AVAC continued to be publicized. As a corps, we had ideas that conflicted with AVAC. The corps was made up of honest men, businessmen and idealists, and they were soon indignant at some of the situations that arose; it became more and more difficult to maintain harmony. For example, Paris Post of the American Legion had accepted 150 automobile frames for one-and-a-half-ton truck bodies from the French Government, and these were turned over by the Legion to AVAC. The Legion was therefore clear of the transaction. There were only two bodies. Out of 150 frames there were 148, which the French Army needed badly, that were useless and wasting; but nobody seemed to have jurisdiction over them.

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It became obvious to all of us that chiselers and grafters were making money out of this exceptional generosity of the French Government. Frames and parts disappeared strangely, or could not be found. Both the American Legion and the Iroquois Corps were irritated and exasperated, because neither now had jurisdiction over this equipment and they could do nothing about it. Factors that led to investigation and scandal were present. Members of the corps felt they had joined to drive ambulances, not to become embroiled in political matters. It got so bad that I wanted to get out of Paris, and would have been glad to drive an ambulance anywhere.

Sitting in the big hall of Château de la Ronce at a late November assembly, the corps met to consider a plan we hoped to submit to the AVAC. Logs were crackling in the fireplace, and it was chilly and raining outside. We felt that we could use a staff car, twenty ambulances, mobile kitchen, and repair truck. We had the necessary drivers and technicians for a unit of that size. The AVAC approved and began further negotiations with the French Government for eighteen additional ambulance bodies. In the meantime, the two already assembled were turned over to us, and we used them for training, simulating war conditions and

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THE IROQUOIS AMBULANCE CORPS AT THE CHATEAU

Acme, Paris

AROUND THE TABLE WITH EDDIE WIGGINS

Acme, Paris

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driving them into homemade craters and almost inaccessible places.

Chief of the Iroquois Corps at that time was Jean de la Chesnaye, a former member of the Foreign Legion with enough medals to cover his chest. Steel Powers — who came from Atlanta, Georgia — was automotive and technical adviser. I was secretary of the corps, and Mona Ducret, a pretty blonde, was clerk and typist and handled all paperwork. J. G. B. Campbell, assistant manager of the Guaranty Trust Company of New York in Paris, was adviser to the corps, and among the ambulance drivers were H. deBecker, a retired importer; Charles Ahrenfeldt, a former Princeton student; Bob Newman of Chicago, Nick Joseph of Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, Stewart Donaldson of Boston, Robert Judels, Joseph Maronna and Charles Stehlin of New York; Bill Mock of Evanston, Illinois, Grima Johnson of Paris, George Folds of Lake Forest, Illinois, and Lewis Bartlett of Washington.

As negotiations progressed, the internal situation became worse. Jean de la Chesnaye resigned from the corps, and Mr. Campbell left us to join the Field Service.

By that time, we were reasonably well drilled. We had started from scratch, knowing nothing about the business of transporting the sick and

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the wounded, but American doctors and nurses donated their services. The French Army Medical Corps co-operated, and by early December we had learned the fundamentals, how to apply bandage and splints, what kind of case to move, and which to let alone. We had a lot still to learn, but we were willing, and discipline had had an effect. We felt that we were ready for action, but there was none. The "phony war" phase was beginning, and France was secure behind the Maginot Line.

When Russia moved into Finland, an opportunity was provided. The AVAC thought it would be a nice gesture to send one of our ambulances to Finland, and with the approval of the French Government suggested this to M. Brusin, consul at the Finnish Legation. In due time the Finnish Government and military agreed that they would be glad to have it. Of our two ambulances, therefore, one was allocated to the Eastern front and the other to the Western front, and AVAC hoped that this number shortly would be substantially increased.

There were no hypocritical claims advanced. This was a gesture and nothing more, and Colonel Sparks admitted frankly that the ambulance was going to Finland purely for publicity purposes to focus wider international attention upon the

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AVAC. We did not like the idea of going to Finland for publicity. We wanted to go for the serious business of driving an ambulance and giving the Finns a hand in an ugly war in which they were greatly outnumbered. There was a good deal of internal criticism and some recrimination. Newspaper correspondents, who had been our friends up to now but had learned the purpose behind the plan, changed their attitudes; and whereas they had been helping and advising us, they now looked upon us quizzically and suspiciously. They were not spending good money on cable tolls to promote a publicity stunt, and we were embarrassed when we met them. We wanted to get as far away from Paris as we could. We finally consented to go to Finland for this purpose. We would pose dutifully for newsreels, still photographs, and give out approved statements.

Our Iroquois unit was swallowed up. No further reference was made to it.

Nerves were pretty strained about that time, and Powers and I went to Fred Payne's bar to have a highball and talk it over. A group of British and French officers sitting near by were disputing whether the French or the British Army was superior. One of the English officers saw the insignia on our tunics, came over to examine it, discovered

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that it was American, and told us contemptuously to go back home and hide behind the Atlantic. When the waiters and military police cleared away the debris we went back to our château headquarters and felt much better.

It was agreed that I would lead to Finland an expedition of four men, including myself, to drive two ambulances: Robert H. Newman, a wisecracking wit, who quit Exeter Academy to become a play reader, radio script writer, and write funny pieces for the *New Yorker;* Lewis Bartlett, twenty-five, educated at Lawrenceville, Columbia, and Upsala in Sweden. His family was then living in Rio de Janeiro. He was big and tough and had buck teeth. He spoke Swedish as fluently as English. William B. T. Mock, instructor in English at Stephens College in Columbia, Missouri, on sabbatical leave at the Sorbonne, was the brains department of the detail, B.A., Dartmouth, '34, M.A., Northwestern, '36 — a swell guy and great companion.

There was a round of official and unofficial farewell parties in our honor. Wherever and whenever we showed up in Paris, it was an excuse for a drink and a toast, and the farewells were prolonged, because it was close to Christmas before we were

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ready to sail. One of the final celebrations was at the Finnish Legation — where M. Brusin, Finnish consul, M. Alvo, acting chargé d'affaires, and Mme. Holma drank toasts to us. Among the Finnish and American people attending were two schools of thought: the Americans, particularly the newspapermen, considered it part of a gag, but the Finns were serious and sober-faced and felt sure that some of us would never come back.

We found that the ambulances would go on one boat, and we would leave on another. The final celebration was a public farewell in Rouen when the ambulances were stowed aboard a Swedish boat. Dignitaries and French army officers bade us *bon voyage,* but we returned to Paris, left the Gare de Nord for Brussels, continued to Antwerp by train, and boarded the Finnish cargo ship *Norma,* a fairly substantial boat of 1500 tons.

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Chapter Eight

I STOOD beside Bartlett at the railing of the *Norma* as the ship moved slowly through the outer port and pointed its prow into the undulating ground swells of the North Sea. We were under convoy, we knew, but the only visible evidence of it was the gray silhouette of the *Virgo* far in the distance off our port side. She had guns, an anti-aircraft battery and depth charges, and around us, in a great circle, were fighting ships that we could not see, escorting and protecting us. The shore line faded, and in a few hours we came into heavier sea. The *Norma* wallowed, corkscrewed, shook herself and creaked. She was seaworthy enough, but appeared to be settled so far down into the water that each descent into a trough between swells seemed to end with a bump that we could feel in our toes.

There were not more than a dozen official passengers including ourselves, and all of them were on

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deck, standing at the rail watching, as though fearful that something suspicious on the water, above it, or beneath it, might escape the attention of sailor lookouts. Without orders or suggestion, all of us seemed to feel that eyes not otherwise occupied should be focused on the sea or the horizon.

We stood there silently for an hour or more until the backs of our legs became stiff and we became uneasy. "This would be a swell place to play bridge." Bartlett turned to me. "How about it?"

"Sure," I said. "Do you think we could get a couple more?"

We canvassed the passengers around the rail, but most of them looked at us blankly, or refused with absent-minded courtesy.

"No soap." Bartlett lifted his hands helplessly. "I can see we're going to have a wonderful time on this trip. What are they all so dead-pan about?" We stood at the rail again and became auxiliary lookouts. The *Norma* was still corkscrewing through the rollers. First the sun was on our right, glinting on the water, and in an hour or two it was on our left.

"What goes on here?" Bartlett expressed a thought that was in both of our minds. "Does the skipper of this tub know how to navigate it?"

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He stopped an officer on the deck and inquired.

"We're zigzagging through mine fields," he was told.

"What makes this ship come down with such a bang after every roller?" he asked.

"We're loaded to the gunwales," the officer explained.

"With what?" Bartlett asked.

There was no longer any reason for secrecy. "Ammunition," the officer said.

We returned to our watch, as sober-faced as the others. It was not a pleasant prospect. We were, after all, riding a magnificent floating powder keg. In the holds were cases of cartridges, shells, bombs, T.N.T., dynamite and sundry raw materials for explosion. There could be no near-hits or near-misses of the *Norma*. Any violent disturbance, even going aground, would blow the craft to bits. It explained the tense faces and the visible evidences of strain on the part of officers and crew, always casting their eyes toward the sky and the wide circle where it met the sea. In less than twenty-four hours, all of us felt like hunted persons on a hunted boat, and passengers and crew were more often on deck than below, in spite of falling temperature and cramped decks loaded with cargo,

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where there was but little room to pace or even move.

On the second day, the seas became heavier and the *Norma* wobbled from side to side, creaking constantly and shaking herself, throwing a high spray on the forward deck that kept us aft. Our eyes kept roving the horizon, and although the sea was heavy, the sun was bright and glinting on the water. Eyes became tired from squinting. In the early afternoon the watch on the bridge became a knot of officers with powerful marine glasses trained on the *Virgo*. We gathered at the rail to watch and saw a speck climb out of the horizon, and within ten or fifteen minutes grow larger and larger until we could hear the faint, distant throb of the motors. The *Virgo* was several miles from us, and we were apprehensive. Word came down to us from the bridge that there was a fog bank about two hours ahead of us.

The plane circled the *Virgo*, but did not come close enough for us to identify it; then it disappeared again over the horizon. Radios were muted so that our position would not be revealed, and there was no way of communicating with the *Virgo* to discover whether this was a friendly or an enemy plane. If it was an observation plane rec-

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onnoitering, we were sure that more would return, and we were relieved when the first wisps of fog swept over us. In a few minutes, we were enveloped and felt safe.

When we came out of the fog in the evening, five or six hours later, the *Virgo* was no longer in sight, and again the silent radio could not help. The Captain thought that perhaps the *Virgo* had changed her course. It got colder by the hour. Bartlett, Newman, Mock and I walked the crowded decks contemplating and speculating upon the mission that was bringing us to Finland.

Technically, I was the leader of this *avant garde*. In the official shuffle and swift arrangements before departing, I had been commissioned a First Lieutenant in the French Army, a section leader of volunteers, and we were now on loan to the Finnish Army. A document in my breast pocket designated me as leader of the expedition, and I had been told that I was to be commissioned a Captain in the Finnish Army. I had met Miss Mannerheim in Paris and had a letter from her introducing me to the Field Marshal.

On that crisp December night, we looked at brilliant stars in a blue dome of sky; and I thought of home, of the pleasant life I had been leading in Paris and Monte Carlo, of Guita and the girls I

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had not been able to find in Paris to say good-by to. A curtain seemed to have dropped upon an old life, and in the past several weeks I had been completely transplanted into a new one. The strict discipline, which once would have made me a rebel, I now accepted willingly and voluntarily, although I had never been geared to a regular routine.

At nine we went below to our staterooms and turned in. Whether it was because I was riding on a great cask of explosives, or for some other reason, I was not seasick, although the *Norma* pitched and tossed throughout the night. At daybreak we were up, washed, shaved and dressed, and ready for another day's vigil. We went down to a small galley amidships and had a breakfast of mush and coffee, and then went up on deck.

On the fourth day we sighted the coast of Norway, which looked to me much like the coast of Maine; but we kept far off the rocks. A crack-up in a storm would be disastrous to a ship loaded with ammunition, and there were some aboard who recalled, pleasantly, the devastation wreaked in Halifax when two such ships and cargoes collided in the harbor. We continued to zigzag, proceeding gingerly; and as we approached Kristiansand in Norway, we were flagged to a stop at the entrance

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to the harbor and for the following several hours were snarled in red tape. Cargo, passengers and papers had to be checked by government officials, a process so long and complicated that we were delayed a full day in arriving at Malmö.

Crew and passengers were relieved to walk down the gangplank to the pier in Malmö, but there was no time for sightseeing. A schedule had been arranged: we boarded trains immediately to roll and labor over hills and through bleak countryside. When we arrived in Stockholm, we found that we must wait a week for our ambulances. Rooms had already been provided for us, and it appeared that our pathway into Finland had been as carefully planned as a Cook's Tour. We discovered, almost as soon as we arrived, that we were celebrities. We had been expected, committees had been organized, and a chairman already had a list of receptions that we must attend. Within twenty-four hours we found ourselves fighting a war by rushing from one cocktail lounge to another. Every anti-Axis organization in the capital had a party in our honor, as did a number of auxiliary organizations. Swedish liquor, we found out quickly, is potent and misleading. If you took what seemed to be a temperate amount, you found yourself getting stiff, and you had to refuse drinks, even at the risk of offending someone you really should join in a drink. We remon-

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AMBULANCE DRIVERS IN FINLAND

Paramount News

CAMOUFLAGED FOR WORK IN SNOW

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strated that we could not take it, and Swedes looked at us as though we were sissies and said: "You have to drink here to keep warm."

They were right about the cold. We were dressed in fur hats and ski suits, and were so cold so long and so often that we changed the designation "Iroquois Corps" to "Brass Monkey Brigade." Liquor made it difficult, and at times almost impossible, to be diplomatic. After a few days in Stockholm, it was clear to us that the Swedes were by no means united. There were both pro-Axis and anti-Axis supporters among those whom we met, although both sides seemed to be genuinely sorry for Finland. At the biggest of these parties in Crown Prince's Hall, where about a thousand people were toasting us, each of us had to speak, but only Bartlett could speak Swedish. New Year's Eve, under the circumstances, was a bad night for it. Bartlett told them that we were on our way to Finland to help a plucky little people, and although we had come a long distance from the United States, Finland was only next door to Sweden. "Why aren't you people already in there?" he asked. "Why don't you do something more substantial than sending your best wishes and an aspirin tablet?" That speech was not a success.

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That story was circulated in selected spots throughout the city, but I thought I detected a glint of satisfaction, as well as amusement, in the eyes of the Count and Countess Sparre, who had us to dinner the following night. They were a charming, gray-haired couple. The Countess is the sister of Field Marshal Mannerheim, and both were sad and hurt at the devastation being wrought in their country.

This picnic ended before we could talk ourselves into more trouble. The ambulances arrived around January 5, were reloaded to cross the Baltic, and this time we accompanied them. We arrived in Turku (Abö) just before daylight. Our ambulances were unloaded, and we found ourselves on the dock of a blacked-out town with the temperature hovering around zero, with no knowledge of roads, direction or the country around us. Our cars were camouflaged for the Western front, and here in the snow they were as conspicuous as coal trucks.

Officers of the Finnish Medical Corps arrived to meet us, but a far more elaborate reception was slightly delayed, and when it came, it was spectacular. A Finnish officer directed us to an inland shelter where we would find white paint and white outer camouflage clothing for ourselves. When we

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reached the shelter, the sky was graying in the east; the Reds came over and blew to bits the port we had just left. This was my first taste of bombing. The shelter shivered and trembled. The whining, crashing and booming were terrific. The flashes and explosions made a good show, but I'll frankly admit I was too scared to appreciate it. When they had gone and the silence became so intense that you could hear it, we looked at each other. Bartlett said: "This is it." I have been bombed frequently since that time, but no other experience gave me the same feeling; nor was anything since ever quite so sickening as the ruins we looked upon.

We spent all of that day in the shelter painting the ambulances white. Finnish trucks and cars pulled in and out of the shelter for fuel and oil. Finnish army officers and drivers nodded greetings and welcome. All of them seemed to be well past the stage where anything would surprise them, even a quartet of Americans with a couple of ambulances.

A Finnish liaison officer who could speak English had been assigned to us to guide us to our field hospital. At nightfall, he looked at the sky and inquired of us "Ready?"

I nodded. "How do we get there?" I asked.

"You don't drive there," he said. "Gasoline is

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too scarce. You load those ambulances on a freight car after dark and pray to God."

That night we drove the ambulances to a railhead, loaded them on a flat car, and every few miles for the next thirty-six hours we changed trains because sections of the roadbed had been blown up. We backed and filled, changed directions, shifted, coughed and chugged, and finally had to abandon our ambulances and leave it to the ingenuity of a Finnish transportation detail to bring them up behind us. We had not anticipated those thirty-six hours, and had no rations. I had a pint of brandy and decided to hold on to it, because anything might happen. There were a number of Lottas' canteens along the rail line with piping hot soup and hot tea. The first time we stopped at one of these places, the temperature was around twenty below. My hands and fingers were so numb that I couldn't hold a mug of tea until I had thawed them out. The soup, we found, had no food value, but at least it was hot.

We left the ambulances to climb aboard a troop train that unloaded us at Sortavala, northeast of Lake Ladoga, where we got into a large bus for a few more miles, and left that for a convoy of sledges that brought us to a Field Hospital on the Loimila front, and along the way we got our first

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taste of the war and what it means in wholesale death and destruction. All of our supplies came through Sortavala, a town of small wooden houses with an abnormally large railroad junction, obviously new and built for military purposes. I saw it then as a homely Finnish town in a forest, a white-blanketed forest of uncanny silence. I saw it a few months later, when it was a mass of crackling fires and smoldering ruins in the heart of a silent forest: cement chimneys standing like skeletons; mangled bodies, hit by bomb splinters, or falling timber; men and women walking around dazed, looking for families. And although the town was destroyed, the railroad junction had been rebuilt, and still looked new.

At the Field Hospital we found three doctors and about a dozen Lottas (nurses) and about the same number of men, each a combined driver, orderly and handy man. This hospital had been a schoolhouse. It was a single-story wooden building of ten rooms of various sizes, a fairly large cellar used as a laundry, and the *suana* or steam bath, and a storeroom that provided a passable air-raid shelter. Four of the rooms were wards with rows of beds. Two were used as operating rooms. The kitchen had not been changed. The rest of the space was used for stretchers for wounded who were waiting until

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they could be transported back to a base hospital. A few hundred yards away was a stable. Men were quartered there, and there was a horse in a stall. I found later that the most comfortable place for me to sleep was in the stall with the horse; his body kept me warm.

A quarter of a mile away was a small farmhouse where the doctors and nurses were billeted. In the near-by woods we fashioned a lean-to for our ambulances. Hundreds of wounded, both Finnish and Russian, passed through this field hospital every week. The doctors were overworked. They spoke some English, but no French, and as our ambulances had not come through yet, we pitched in to give them a hand. When a doctor amputated a leg, it was the first time that I had ever seen an operation, and I was called upon to assist. There was no anesthetic, and my job was to hold the patient on the table.

During the first week, we were assigned to Finnish ambulance drivers — to ride with them learning the various forest passes to the front; we picked up a few Finnish words necessary for our own safety. English was a strange language to the ears of some Finns, and we memorized phrases to let those who inquired, and the injured we would carry, know that we were friends, driving ambu-

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lances for Finland. We were the only foreign ambulance drivers on that front until a Swedish unit moved in weeks later. Our unfamiliarity with the language subjected us to the constant danger of being killed by our friends.

Finnish drivers showed us the various collecting posts in our sector of the Ladoga area. Because Russian bombers were always overhead and air raids were continuous during daylight hours, ambulances went to the collecting posts only after dark, but the winter nights were so long that we could cover a radius of twenty miles. We fell into the routine quickly. We slept during the day, but there was never time for more than a few hours of sleep. The doctors always needed help in the operating rooms, and we were shaken awake to give them a lift. In the early morning when we returned from our rounds, the bunks of the hospital had to be cleared of men who had died during the night. We removed them, put them in wooden boxes, tagged them to be shipped back, and often crept into their still warm beds for our own sleep.

Nurses and drivers took turns on lookout at air-raid spotting posts. Some of the nurses were young, and pretty. One of them, Helmie Hottie, an eighteen-year-old girl, usually relieved me at the lookout post. Every night I left her there, a

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shadow against the twilight, dressed in white, looking aloft for planes; and I returned to climb behind a wheel and make the nightly rounds.

When we had been working a week, I wanted a bath, and by that time had reached the stage where I would attempt the *suana,* in spite of the fact that it seemed to be an invitation to pneumonia. I went into the cellar, where bricks and coals are heated and water thrown upon them generates steam to bring perspiration. After that the process was to beat the body with birch twigs, rush out into the snow and roll around at twenty below, and rush back into the *suana* to warm up again. As a delousing process, I never found it highly successful.

When our own ambulances arrived and we took over, we discovered that we were in greater danger from Finnish road sentries than we were from Russian patrols. We had learned to recognize the Finnish command to halt, but the Finns had not learned the sounds that we thought were Finnish answers; and our puzzled observations aloud in English did not help matters. Somehow it was noised about that front that we were Americans. The lingual troubles we had with injured men were even more painful. We picked up a delirious, wounded Finn, put him in the ambulance, and

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when he heard us speaking English at the wheel, he thought we were speaking Russian, burst his stretcher straps and tried to kill himself. We always had the same fear of running into a Russian patrol and being taken prisoner. We picked up another Finn who had been shot in the back, rushed him back to the station where the bullet was removed. He was bandaged, got off the operating table and paid off for the operation in money he had taken from captured Russians.

Movement outdoors, during daylight hours, was restricted. If we happened to be out when airplanes were sighted, we dropped to the snow and lay there, invisible in our white clothing, until danger passed. The temperature was always our worst enemy, a still, intense penetrating cold that we could never escape. Indoors or outdoors that inexorable cold pursued us.

The collecting posts, where we loaded injured into our ambulances, were caves and shelters hidden in the forests. In each of these was a doctor and a few stretcher bearers, huddled together for warmth, and soldiers waited long hours to get them back when their turns were done. Whether by design or accident, high explosives were always dropping around them. Once when I was still one hundred yards from one of these posts, a bomb

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made an almost direct hit. Bartlett and I ran over and dug furiously for as many as we could save. Men, already badly wounded, were killed. Out of fifty, we retrieved twenty-five, among them the surgeon who had been on duty. He was all but buried in rubble, and we worked feverishly to get him. When we finally exposed him, got him on a stretcher and into the ambulance, it was clear that if he lived, his days as a surgeon were ended. He was unconscious, and his right arm was shattered. Life and his profession had held great promise for him, we were told at the hospital, a promise that will never be fulfilled.

The Finns were preparing an offensive and we cleared our hospital of all patients and rushed them back to the base hospital, in preparation. When the offensive began, Finnish troops at Loimila and Salmi began encircling the Eighteenth Russian Division on the East side of Lake Ladoga. Our communications lines became longer and more difficult, but the Finns managed somehow to keep them open so that we could take care of the wounded while the troops consolidated their positions and held the Russians in this trap. The Russians fought desperately to break out. A wounded Russian prisoner, questioned before a commanding officer as I stood by, confessed that for days in the trap he had had

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only one piece of sugar and two slices of black bread each day to eat. When their ammunition was about to give out, they made a final dash for freedom, and were all but annihilated. For six weeks they were cut off. They died of hunger, froze to death or were killed. The only survivors were a few of the wounded.

The stomachs and sensibilities of ambulance drivers hardened quickly during that drive. On one ambulance mission, a Swedish driver came upon a weird scene in still life, a Russian patrol standing by the side of a road, the men upright and frozen stiff in the snow, a Russian officer beside them, pistol in hand. All had had their throats cut, as though an expert Finn on ski patrol had whizzed by them, his puka extended like a balancing pole with a razor-sharp knife on the end of it, and slit them where they stood as he passed. The officer's pistol was loaded, and not a shot had been fired from it.

Plowing through the woods in our ambulance, Bartlett and I came across a group of Finns tapping a telephone wire to a Russian Division. A Russian officer was trying to reach Headquarters and was talking to a Finn. "We need food and ammunition right away," he said.

The Finn replied in Russian: "We can't send you

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food, but we'll send you plenty of ammunition. What is your exact location?"

The Russian gave the information, and in a few minutes the entire position was wiped out. In one section of forest where we occasionally ran into the cross-fire of both Finnish and Russian patrols, Bartlett tacked a sign to a tree: NOTICE: IT IS AGAINST THE RULES TO SHOOT AMERICANS IN THIS FOREST.

At the beginning of the offensive the thermometer dived and it became colder and colder. The temperature got down to fifty below zero, so cold that a wounded man could not stay on the ground more than two hours without freezing to death. We had some horrible cases.

The cold restricted our work in unforeseen ways. We had to drive our ambulances at least once an hour to prevent the oil in the motor and the grease in the wheels from freezing. Frozen wheel grease would hold it as rigid as a brake. The distilled water in our batteries froze. Starter grease froze, and often we had to crank the engines by hand.

One day my car stalled and I spent so much time getting it in operation again that both of my feet froze. When I got back to the hospital and got shoes and stockings off, my feet were so hard that they sounded on the floor as if I were walking with

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wooden cleats. Outside, I did not notice anything unusual, but after I came into the hospital, where it was warm, my feet began to ache and swell, and in a little while I could no longer walk. I was sent to bed. My feet were massaged with snow and painted with iodine. I lost all of my nails, and they have never grown back. For months I could not wear an ordinary pair of shoes. I never appreciated brandy more in my life.

For clothing we wore everything we could put on, and still move around. When my feet were frozen, I was wearing three pairs of heavy woolen socks wrapped in newspaper; all-felt, hip snow boots, lined with straw. I wore two pairs of woolen, long-leg underwear, a woolen shirt, sweater, my khaki uniform, a greatcoat, and over it all a white camouflage uniform; and yet I was cold.

The scenes on that offensive that stay with me are: A town that was bombed, where I picked up a five-year-old boy, whose home had been destroyed and whose family were killed — he was wandering around, crying and frightened; another little Finnish boy, waving an American flag; and the laughs that were contained in the Russian propaganda issued to prove that Mannerheim was a capitalist.

Our food in Finland was wholesome, but scarce. For breakfast we had hard black bread and hot tea;

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for lunch, at eleven o'clock, pea soup with frozen potatoes and meat — usually horse meat; tea, and no sugar. Dinner was at five: a hot cereal, sometimes hot rice and milk. At any time of the day or night, we could have hot tea, and frequent drinks of it seemed to prevent sore throats. Drivers always liked to go to hospitals because nurses made such a fuss over us and fed us. Nevertheless, we were always hungry, tired and cold. We received no mail, knew nothing of what was going on outside Finland. I thought of home often, and when I slept, my dreams were of home.

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Chapter Nine

ALTHOUGH we were a "lost" Yankee corps, according to American newspaper correspondents who had not been able to find us, we were not actually lost. We knew where we were, but the correspondents did not. General Headquarters of the Army of Finland at that time had much more on its mind than keeping track of four American ambulance drivers somewhere on the Lake Ladoga front. One of the things incomprehensible to officers and soldiers on all fronts, I found, was the manner and means by which American correspondents, both newspaper and radio, got around the world and bobbed up in inaccessible and unexpected places. The legendary greeting "Doctor Livingstone, I presume" is as tame and commonplace as an everyday "Hello" in Times Square, compared to some of the greetings that have been extended in this war.

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The four of us had had bad cases of frozen feet that we got by standing for hours in the snow with gasoline blow-torches in our hands trying to thaw out the grease in our ambulance crankcases. Newman and Bartlett had recovered. Mock had an infected toe, and I was just about able to hobble around again, and we were in the schoolhouse east of Sortavala, when Courtney Terrett of International News Service walked in and said: "Hello, fellows, what goes on here?"

We were so tired of hearing our own voices by that time that these casual words, a sudden and unexpected Americanism, were as homelike as church bells in Bridgewater. We were all struck dumb for a few moments. "In case you don't know it," he went on, "you men are practically the lost battalion of this war; so come on, give out. Where have you been hiding? I finally traced you here through headquarters at Helsinki."

We told him what we had been doing and what had happened to us, but we were far more interested in finding out from him what was going on throughout the rest of the world. He gave us the first news we had of the quiet Western front and the so-called "phony war," and told us that American public opinion was changing and that sentiment for intervention was increasing. He was sur-

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prised to find that we were all college men, and for a couple of days he made us his career. He interviewed Finnish officers and men, and talked with hospital nurses to find out what they thought of us, and episodes that were commonplace to us he found absorbingly interesting. It never occurred to us, for example, when we were kidding Finnish nurses, leafing through dictionaries for the right questions leading toward a date — such as "Will you accompany me to the opera this evening or would you prefer the ballet?" — that our predicament would be recorded all over the United States.

It is true that although we were in Finland we went about things in an American way; but some of those ways brought a grin a yard wide to Terrett's face. I presume that when Terrett found us near Sortavala, other newspapers cabled the information back to their correspondents. Within the next few days we had a congress of newspaper and radio men bearing down on us, and I never met such a friendly, thoughtful, helpful set of people. I'll never be able to repay some of them for extricating me from awkward positions, and in situations that at times seemed to be hopeless. Walter Kerr of the *New York Herald Tribune* and Arthur Menken of Paramount News turned out to be friends in need in a bad pinch, and actually got me

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out of Finland when it looked as if I might be sentenced to remain there for life.

Menken wanted a movie record of our ambulance work under actual war-front conditions. He came around with us to the pickup stations, took hundreds of feet of film, and dived into the snow as nimbly as the rest of us when Red planes came over. He left his camera occasionally to give us a lift loading men into the ambulances, and he slept with us in the schoolhouse. Arthur had seen plenty of action; nevertheless, a man who was dying in the schoolroom that night kept him awake. Until the death rattle had ceased, and silence indicated the man had become a corpse, Arthur could not roll over and sleep.

The two or three days' visit with the newspapermen was as good as a vacation. When men live together hourly over a long period, nerves are inclined to become strained and tempers short, particularly if danger of sudden death is always present. A cough at the wrong time, a sniffle, or an innocent remark by one might be resented by another, when we were overtired, cold and hungry. The newspapermen relieved tension, told us funny stories, and we felt much better, merely because they came. When they left, we buckled down again to the grim business of hauling the wounded.

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Once again we were driving through forest lanes in the moonlight, over crunching snow in that overpowering silence, watching the steam from our breath, pounding gloved hands against the steering wheel and stamping our feet to keep circulation going. Again we were diving for cover when Red planes came over, pulling up beside caves and shelters, exchanging a few words with doctors and Lottas and racing back to the Field Hospital. Again we were battling engines in still cold at fifty below zero, holding blowtorches to crankcases to loosen greases, and cursing the engines even more bitterly than muledrivers.

I pulled up to a rough cave in the forest one night, wheels skidding on the hard-packed snow, and Bartlett and I jumped out of the ambulance and lumbered into the place in our hip-high boots, greatcoats and fur hats. We had been silent on the way out. Intense silence seems to breed silence. We did not feel like talking. Conversation is not attractive when the temperature is around fifty below zero, Fahrenheit. Needles of cold stiffen your lips, and sting like hornets at every exposed inch of skin on your face.

Warmth thaws out lips and loosens the tongue again. The cave was a rough shelter in the rocks, completed by boards, moss and snow. Inside was

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a small oil stove, hot tea steaming on it; a couple of Finnish soldiers, one of whom could speak Russian, and a Finnish doctor who could speak English.

"Back again," I told the doctor. He nodded an acknowledgment and looked toward the tea, an invitation to have a drink. I poured some for Bartlett and myself, and looked around at a half-dozen stretchers of men waiting to be taken back to the schoolhouse. One of them attracted my attention. Part of his clothing had been burned from his body.

"What's that?" I asked the doctor.

"Russian aviator," the doctor answered.

"Shot down?" I inquired.

He nodded. "Came down in flames," the doctor explained. "Some of the men pulled him out and hauled him in. He's a bad egg."

"What do you mean, bad?" I asked.

"Just plain nasty," the doctor went on.

I went over and looked down at him. He was shivering. I felt sorry for him, peeled off my greatcoat and stooped to cover him — and straightened up quickly and just in time, because he tried to spit in my face.

"Nice little playmate, isn't he?" I said to the doctor. "Tell him we're Americans; that we're trying to help him."

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"No use," the doctor answered. "I've told him everything. He understands."

"Let's load him aboard," Bartlett said, "and shove off."

We picked up the stretcher. I looked down at the Russian and he made a rude noise with his lips. He continued to taunt until I lost patience. It was the only time I ever felt like letting an injured man have it.

The Finnish soldiers, strapping him to the stretcher, were so outraged that they pulled the straps so tightly I thought they would strangle him. I came back into the cave for the next victim and the doctor whispered softly: —

"It's a cold night. Nobody will ever know or care whether that stretcher slips off the ambulance between here and the Field Hospital."

I knew how the doctor felt, but I delivered him to the Field Hospital. He recovered. Months later I was hoping that he was bombing Germans as viciously as he bombed us.

On another such occasion my ambulance-driving came to a quick and unexpected halt. Late in February, Russian planes had been particularly busy bombing railroad lines, and damage was so heavy that the hospital train had not been able to reach our railhead. There were one hundred

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wounded in our Field Hospital with no place to go, and there were two hundred more waiting to be brought back from the front. Nights were bright. The sky was thick with planes and we could not operate. Word came to us that the hospital train would be able to get through to the railhead.

Our cars were hidden under trees near the Field Hospital, and mine had been idle so long that it was hard to get it started. Red planes had been patrolling this section, but we felt reasonably safe, fairly certain that the trees would protect us. Bartlett and I went out with a blowtorch at sunset to get it started. We worked on it for a couple of hours, and were still working long after night had fallen.

We were too busy to keep an airplane watch, and paid no attention to the sky. Bartlett was behind the wheel pulling on the choke. An airplane dived, skimmed the treetops. Immediately there was a "bang!" and I felt a terrific pain in my right arm. I looked down and my right hand was twisted almost at right angles to the forearm. Bartlett rushed me over to the hospital and the chief surgeon went to work on it.

I'll never know what hit me. I thought at first it was a block of wood, but there was none around. It must have been a chunk of hard earth thrown

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up by the explosive. There was no anesthetic and the surgeon had to set it without it, while Bartlett assisted. Bartlett went out alone that night, and I became a casualty in the hospital. The surgeon made splints out of Russian supplies that had been captured, put my arm in a plaster cast, and the next day I joined the rest of the wounded on a hospital train to Jensiin. There were some compensations. One of the Lottas shared her meal with me, and for the first time in months, I had an egg and a cup of cocoa.

At Helsinki I reported at the War Office and was told to report to Paris headquarters at once.

I looked up Arthur Menken, who greeted me with "I had a hunch that you and I would be meeting again soon. How are you, and what happened?" I told him.

"I'm broadcasting tonight over Columbia's world-wide news round-up. It will be one o'clock in the morning here, and eight o'clock in Bridgewater. How about going on for an interview?"

"Sure," I told him.

"Sit down," he said, "while I work out a script." He worked out the interview, and I sent a cable home to have the family listen. The next morning I went to the American Consul's office in Helsinki to make arrangements to get to Paris, and although

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I was an American, I might as well have been an Eskimo or an Egyptian, because I couldn't get any help there. I had French money, but apparently it was no good, and I couldn't get money in the consular office. I turned to Walter Kerr of the *New York Herald Tribune* and Arthur Menken, told them what I was up against, and they went into action. Where a consular office, which might be expected to give me a lift, fell down, these two newspapermen, who would not ordinarily be expected to make a stranger's cause their own, succeeded — admirably. They staked me to money for food and transportation. They got me a seat in an airplane from Abö to Stockholm, and I left immediately after an air raid there. They had also arranged matters so that I got another plane seat there and flew to Copenhagen, Amsterdam and Brussels, and went from there by train to Paris.

After Finland, Paris, to me, was Paradise, a place to bathe, and shave, and eat good food. I went into Cartier's on the Rue de la Paix, dirty and unshaven, and my worries were over, because my friends took charge. But I did not stay in Paris long. When I reported at the AVAC office, I was told that I was to leave the next day for America on a special mission. I was delighted to have the opportunity, and anxious to go home, although there were cer-

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tain aspects of the proposal that did not appeal to me. However, I was in no mood to look a gift horse in the mouth.

A good many things had happened in the administration of the American Volunteer Ambulance Corps while I was in Finland. The corps could scarcely be blamed for capitalizing on the national publicity in cabled stories and pictures that had been given to the ambulance drivers on the Eastern front, but I was genuinely surprised at the growth and extent that the organization had so suddenly achieved. As I have explained, the little, original Iroquois Ambulance unit had already been entirely swallowed up; now the same thing, in a different way, seemed to be happening to the AVAC in Paris. The idea of an American Volunteer Ambulance Corps had caught on in the United States, and although organization had been undertaken on a grand scale, I knew very little of the details. The thing that impressed me was that AVAC suddenly seemed to have unlimited resources, and a string of ambulances was coming across the Atlantic. There were constant exchanges of long letters and cablegrams. Control of the venture seemed to be slipping slowly from Paris to New York, and it was now being guided by persons whom I did not know and had never met.

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I had no idea of the size and proportion of fund-raising drives undertaken in our behalf in the United States. My first response to this was that it was fine, from our point of view. It was the good old American way. Generous Americans were contributing, and the man in the street in New York, Chicago and Los Angeles was anxious to give us a hand. I was particularly glad that I was an American and came from that kind of country — until I sat around for a while and talked to other members of the corps. They were arriving at the conclusion that we were Babes in the Woods. According to some of them control of the corps now appeared to be in financial, political and business hands. Paris headquarters was no longer giving orders, but taking them from New York, and transmitting them to the corps. We were on the ground, with a fair idea of what ought to be done, and New York was 3000 miles away, and yet if Paris wanted to do certain things, we had to get permission from New York. At least, that's the way it began to seem. . . .

There had developed, too, a mass of confusing detail. Shipments were going astray. Corps members in Paris were doing paperwork instead of ambulance work, and ambulances had suddenly become big business. All of this appeared to be

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further complicated by jealousies in New York, a behind-the-scenes political pulling and hauling that we could not comprehend or understand. Some of the corps members were, by now, quite furious, and had what they thought was a sound notion that persons sitting at mahogany desks in New York wanted them to go out and earn French decorations and medals of honor for the fairy godfathers in New York who could wave wands and produce money as if by magic. If that would have clarified matters, the ambulance drivers would have been happy to do it.

Before leaving Paris, I called upon Blanchette, who had looked after me when I first came to France as a boy. She was glad to see me, although sorry that I had been injured. It was the last time that I was to see her. She could not get out of the city in time.

Italy was not yet in the war, and I went by train to Genoa to get a ship home. I picked up an Italian newspaper there and saw my picture in it with a caption beneath it: "First U. S. victim of Communism." I returned on the *Manhattan,* which was crowded with passengers, among them H. Gordon Selfridge, Jr., son of the London department store magnate, one of the most casual and matter-of-fact men I had ever met, and Ned Buddy of Para-

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mount News; and we spent considerable time together. It was a long ten-day crossing. When we were passing Gibraltar, English coastal batteries opened up and fired on a Danish ship for refusing to stop, and we learned later that a German crew found aboard it was taken prisoner. I was glad the English got them, and at the same time sorry for the German crew. They showed a lot of courage I thought. At that time I thought the war was almost over, and victory was only a couple of months away.

In mid-Atlantic, we received news of the Russian-Finnish armistice, and I was bewildered. I had promised my friends in the Finnish Army that I would be back, and that I would bring all the help I could with me. I had had a firm conviction that the Finns would fight until it would ultimately end in stalemate and a moral victory for Finland. I knew that Finnish troops were becoming exhausted and their food supplies, munitions and medicines were limited, but at that time I had the same contempt for the fighting qualities and stupidity of the Russian soldier as had the Finnish soldier in the field. The morale of the Finnish soldier was high when I left, and his courage was inexhaustible.

I found, as I have so often found during this

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war, that I had to readjust my thinking and abandon another set of convictions. I knew now I would never return to Finland as I had intended. I had become fond of the Finns and felt loyal to them; their cause had been my cause; but now I must look back again at France. I was more than ever determined to fight for her against the common enemy, Germany.

A few days before arriving in New York, I received a telephone call from the President of the AVAC in New York. My mother and father were with him. It was my first experience talking by telephone from a ship at sea to a hotel room in New York, and I was thrilled by it. I reassured my parents that I was all right, that my broken arm was on the mend, and I could hear the relief in their voices as I talked to them. After all, they had been through a good deal on my account during the past few months, and I knew how they must have worried about me and prayed that I would come home safe. Sometimes, I thought, we hurt those who love us most.

My conversation with James Wood Johnson of the American Ambulance Corps was slightly disturbing.

"Is your arm still in a sling?" he asked me.

"Yes," I told him.

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"Good," he said. "Keep it there. Are you wearing your uniform?"

"Yes."

"Good. I want you to keep on wearing it."

There were a number of other instructions. I was not to talk to newspapermen when they boarded the ship at quarantine. I was not to speak for publication at all until my personal publicity man, Frank Brown of the Harrison-Phelps agency, arrived; and he would assist me in handling reporters.

My arm was in a sling because it had to be. I was wearing my uniform because I had no other clothes. I could not understand why I needed a publicity manager, or why I should be so careful about reporters. Some of the best friends I had in France and Finland were newspaper correspondents. I owed them a debt of gratitude, and because of them I had a high opinion of all newspapermen. It did not seem to me to be right or fair to avoid them or to have an adviser to give me a nod to answer or refuse to answer a question.

Part of my story to newspapermen was being manufactured for me in New York; although by the alchemy of finance and administration, my story to the newspapers was already being prepared for me, and I found that it was accurate.

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My mission, of course, was to raise money for the American Volunteer Ambulance Corps.

I was on deck when the *Manhattan* came into New York Harbor. Instructions to hide from newspapermen could not keep me in a stateroom below, and deny me that first glimpse of the skyline; I was caught unawares when the newspapermen came aboard. I was pointed out to them, and when I saw them approaching, I did a quick sprint for the lower decks, with a score of them chasing me, and remained below until Frank Brown arrived, thinking all the while that the whole business was pretty silly. On many occasions after this, I was to discover that other things about the whole episode were equally silly.

Frank Brown turned out to be an intelligent, understanding person, who had as much contempt for some of the things he was called upon to do as I did for the things I was expected to do. Sometimes he gave me good advice against his own best interests, and a time came when even he revolted and refused to order me around.

I had my first meeting with the gentlemen of the press in mass formation aboard the *Manhattan*. The flashlight bulbs and newsreel picture flares blinded me. All of the New York papers and news services were represented. The experience was new,

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and sometimes perplexing, but Frank Brown guided me through it. I misled the newspapermen unintentionally on some things, because I forgot to consult Frank. For example, I had a naïve idea that I would be able to order my own life when I got ashore, and told them that I would be staying with my brother Dick and his wife in Brooklyn. Then I learned too late that a suite had been booked for me in the Waldorf Astoria.

I did not blame Robert Wilder of the *New York Sun* and smiled as broadly as anybody else at his description: —

> Off hand, it is a little difficult to see how the Russians ever managed to hit John, for he displayed such nimble-footedness when confronted by the Press yesterday that we are sure he would be a hard man to catch in the open. We never did learn why Hasey loped away at the sight of reporters, but he did have the pack in full cry there on the ship for a while, and the boys' tongues were hanging out when they finally cornered him up on A deck. Once cornered, though, Hasey turned out to be an extremely well-mannered and amiable young man, who told us that he lost some of his illusions and most of his toenails around Lake Ladoga and that just as soon as he had his arm back in shape and new toenails, he will be back for the wars and France.

When the interview was over and we neared the uptown piers, I went back on deck to look for my

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parents, my brother and his wife, who would be waiting for me among the crowd, and when I saw them, I know that my eyes welled up with tears. I realized that this was the first time in two years that I had seen them together, and it was my first meeting with my sister-in-law. I'll never forget the expression on my mother's face when she saw my bandaged arm in a sling. I knew then that she had suffered all of my hardships and pains, in spite of the fact that she and my father knew that I was doing what I felt to be my duty.

All day at the Waldorf Astoria people came to wish me luck. Some of them I knew; some I never saw before, and I never figured out why some of them wanted to shake my hand and wish me luck. There had been an exchange of telegrams with Ben Miller of the "We The People" program. I went to CBS studios that night and was interviewed by Gabriel Heater, told my story of what had happened in Finland, how I was injured, and compared Finnish and Russian soldiers. This recital held some interest for me in the first and second telling, but became tiresome and sterotyped during the following weeks when I was called upon to repeat it so often. I found that I had been catapulted suddenly to the eminence of a celebrity, and although public adulation had its advantages, it also had its

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drawbacks. My pictures were now in newsreels. My family had seen them. I looked at them curiously, and felt like a detached spectator watching the actions of a stranger. Once a taxi driver spotted me, patted me on the back, applauded me with a loud "Good boy!" I felt embarrassed.

The next day I went to Washington for a series of press and radio interviews. I seemed to be in an interminable show window, and I found that the easiest and most agreeable behavior was to shake hands, wait for a question and answer it. I had lunch with Senator David I. Walsh at the Capitol Restaurant. A Senator from my home state, I knew that he and I differed at that time on various aspects of the war, although we are now in complete agreement. As a youngster with some ambulance-driving experience, and definite opinions gathered from observation at close range, I did not feel either qualified or capable of discussing these with a Senator who had spent long years in public life. He made me feel at home, but we avoided the more profound problems of war.

I had cocktails with the Finnish minister, M. Procope, then an interview with M. Saint-Quentin, the French Ambassador, reported at the State Department, went to Station WOL for a radio interview with Fulton Lewis, Jr., and got the mid-

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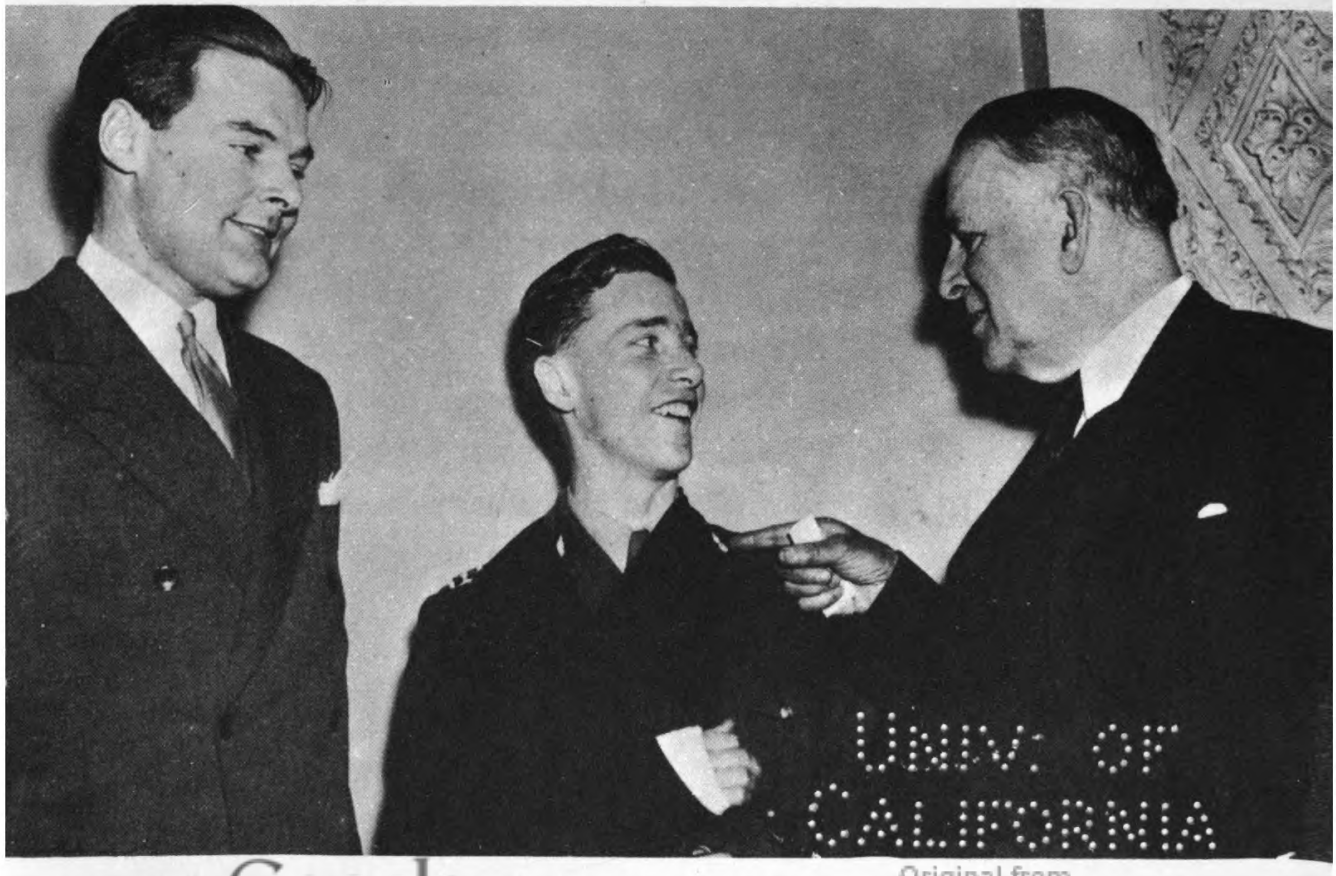
SEEING THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR IN WASHINGTON



INTERVIEW WITH SENATORS LODGE AND WALSH

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night train back to Boston. There, I called upon Governor Leverett Saltonstall of Massachusetts and Mayor Maurice J. Tobin of Boston, and delivered the address of the day at the noonday luncheon of the Boston Advertising Club.

Although it is a staid, conservative New England town, when I finally got to Bridgewater I knew that some of the folks would be glad to see me. But I did not expect to be hailed like a conquering hero, with brass bands, a torchlight parade, church bells ringing, the clanging of fire apparatus and the whine of sirens.

I had not seen much of Bridgewater since I was a boy, and there were not many of the faces that I knew among the thousands who lined the streets or filled Horace Mann Auditorium at Teachers College. I felt grateful for their enthusiasm, and tried to bring home to them the need for help to France. I was among my neighbors — or my parents' neighbors — and the program had a homely, rural touch: Selectman Bart Casey, a Legionnaire, as toastmaster; the salute of the V. F. W. Junior Band, playing "El Capitan" as I came into the hall; Mrs. Bertha Beers at the piano; Bart's characteristic Yankee phrases as he presented Dr. E. V. K. Ronka of Quincy, representing the consulate of Boston; and even the bouquet of flowers given to Miss Signe

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Slitonen, a Finnish worker who had received her diploma in that very hall six years earlier.

I could talk to my own townspeople more freely than to any audience I ever faced; but I was discovering that all American audiences thought that war was far, far from America, and that their interest in what I had to say was no greater, in some respects, than it would have been in an appeal for funds for foreign missions, except that this cause was perhaps better dramatized.

There were other homely touches to that visit in Bridgewater, courtesies and New England practice that I had almost forgotten in the years that I had been away: an Easter card of welcome from the Reverend and Mrs. M. Walker Coe, and a dozen more from friends of my school days. They bridged a gap of years, and made me feel at home again.

However, I was as much on a circuit now as Guita had been as a theatrical performer in France. I was now "managed," and had an itinerary of dates to fill; for the next two months I traveled all over the United States raising funds for ambulances, spreading the gospel of intervention to save France, trying to be a convincing evangelist in a wilderness of indifference. I was entertained by leaders of society, business, politics and orchestras, dined at the Wall Street Club, lunched at the

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Photo S. A. Bauman

AT HOME

Photo S. A. Bauman

ON TEACHERS COLLEGE PLATFORM, BRIDGEWATER

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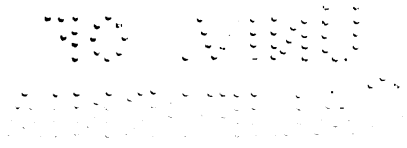

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Stork Club, or had an occasional highball at 21 and Leon and Eddie's, where I had trained for track when I was a student at Columbia. If I was seen with a girl twice in New York, Washington or elsewhere, syndicated columnists promptly tagged her as "my heart." I gave talks and lectures, and some that were billed as "addresses."

I had tea with Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt at the White House, and told her what was, to me, the old story about Finland. I had lunch in Chicago with Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox, who gave me one of the few substantial encouraging opinions I had received: that the United States was now the right track for extending unlimited aid to the Allies. I was a guest at one of Governor Pinchot's famous Sunday evening stag dinners, where I had a chance to say frankly what I was thinking before a number of members of Congress — but although they were friendly and attentive, I was still an immature kid, loosed upon the faculty. Senator George Norris patted me on the back and told me to keep up the good work; the only other words of appreciation came from the Governor's Finnish servant girl, who sought me out to say: "Thanks for what you have done for my country."

Part of my itinerary brought me to the colleges, among them Harvard, Cornell and my own Alma

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Mater, Columbia, and each campus had an organization called the "Student Union." After successive impacts upon these societies of know-it-all children, I was ready to despair that democracy ever could survive. If this were the reservoir of man power that the country must draw from, we were licked, I was sure, even before the war started. Most of them seemed to be Communists, embryo Communists, pinkos, physical cowards, albeit alleged mental giants. They talked about "the horrors of war" as though they really knew something about it. I had come back from Finland to find cells of spineless, yellow-livered students who had nothing but contempt for guns, planes, tanks and battle-wagons, certain that the world could be saved by some hazy sort of revolution, designed to accomplish something with words and without fighting. They were not interested in my speculation on a totalitarian juggernaut that might finally crush them. They were only interested to discover whether my experience had affected my "philosophy of war." Of all of the sleepers I met in my tour of the United States, these, I think, were the greatest dopes.

I had not seen much printed in French newspapers about American youth movements. When I encountered the first group, I thought they were

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a rare and exceptional collection of wise alecks, but when I came across one after another in successive colleges, I could scarcely believe the evidence of my eyes and ears. They wanted all of the benefits of security without fighting for it. They wanted to keep what they had without defending it, even if an invader or an aggressor had determined to take it from them. They talked in airy abstractions; and when I tried to talk what I thought was sense, they heckled in superior amusement. They expected a revolution to solve everything, but their participation would be purely intellectual and vocal. I could not seem to hammer home to them that if a revolution came, they would be part of it. Revolution usually means fighting, and fighting finally gets down to arms, cold steel, or bare fists; and they were not trained in the use of any of them.

I don't think I got a proper perspective on them until I was in the Egyptian desert, mowing down Italians. I wondered then if they thought that I, and the men around me, were fighting a war for them, to give them an opportunity to upset an order that we, here on the desert, were fighting to preserve — and where life was held so cheaply, I thought that if these obstructionists got within range of my gun-sight, I would mow them down

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with as little concern. I wondered how they would greet that kind of reasoning, and presumed that they would characterize it as "fascist," and thought the obvious answer to that was, "Nuts! Out here on the desert, under the circumstances, it seems eminently practical."

When I completed the youth group stands, I wanted no more of them. I couldn't find an ambulance driver in a thousand of them. They did not contribute money until after Germany and Russia went to war, and by that time I wasn't around to collect it.

In spite of the youths, amateur and professional, this propaganda mission had its points. The routing had me sipping Scotch-and-soda with stage stars in back-stage dressing rooms in the principal cities, until a time came when either in Monte Carlo, Paris or the United States, I had met almost every stage and screen personality in the country, a useful piece of missionary work if the world ever came upright again and I got back to the business of selling jewelry. Because I had seen war at close range, I was taken as an authority on it, although I found it difficult to pontificate as an expert.

There were two special theatrical performances in my honor, one by Lynn Fontanne and Alfred Lunt of "There Shall Be No Night" in Washing-

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ton, and another of Howard Lindsay's "Life With Father" in New York. What, by the way, is the proper way to acknowledge a play given in a person's honor? I appreciated both, and it was all very nice.

Of all of the groups of persons I talked to, actors and actresses were by far the most generous, and less than any other group did they offer the bromide: "I just hope that everything comes out all right." (I could not retort then, as I may now, that "hoping" to have it come out all right is not working, or fighting, to make it come out all right.)

My right arm was about healed now, and I was able to take the splint off; and then I discovered that my wrist had never been set properly. There were massages and treatments, but it never did regain its natural flexibility. In time I learned to manipulate my arm and hand, to overcome this impairment. I returned to Boston again in the late spring to speak in French by short wave over WRUL to the soldiers in the Maginot Line; I assured them that America was ultimately coming to help them and said hello to my friends in Paris. They were listening.

Away on tour, I was still in much the same position as the drivers in France. My only contact

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with headquarters in New York was by telegraph, telephone or letter, except for visits there when I came to New York to make a speech or a personal appearance. The average "take" or "gate" on my appearances was around $3000 for each in contributions raised or ambulances underwritten by organizations and independent agencies.

I had been selling France to American audiences for some time, and I supposed that by now enough ambulances were in that country to take care of almost any contingency. Perhaps I was bored and tired of it, and the whirl around the country may have warped my perspective, but at any rate, it seemed to me that I was becoming only a feature attraction in a big business. There had been several differences of opinion and a few disputes. I thought at some times I was being unnecessarily imposed upon. Frank Brown, my publicity agent, had become my friend and protector instead of a watchdog and manager for the home office, and in taking my side in an argument, finally ended by throwing up the job. I missed him.

Now Norway had been invaded and the officials of the AVAC wanted to expand relief work even further. Things were happening fast in Europe. I made a final appearance in St. Louis and rushed back to New York to find out what it was all about. Holland and Belgium were invaded quickly

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and the Germans were on their way to Paris.

I said that I wanted to go back to France right away. But the gloom was thick and there were a number of important objections immediately. They had planned to keep me in the United States for fund-raising purposes. "You can't go back," I was told with emphasis on the word "can't."

My association with the fund-raising project ended then and there. "You'll have to get yourself another boy," I said.

There was a good deal of conversation, but it got nowhere. I was through, and that was the end of it. According to the agreement the outfit was to return me to France at their expense. It was suggested that I go back third class on a freighter that might be leaving someday, but I said "No, you'll fly me back on the Clipper." That was cause for another dispute, and I was told that there was no space available on the Clipper. However, I had good friends in New York, friends with influence in Washington and elsewhere. Before the day was out, I had space for myself on the Clipper; and on June 16 I was on my way across New York to the Pan-American Airways terminal at LaGuardia Field. It was a hasty, precipitous parting. My father, brother and sister-in-law were there to see me off, but I had not had a chance to say good-by in person to my mother.

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Chapter Ten

WE were sixteen in all aboard the Yankee Clipper out of North Beach, an interesting collection of doctors, diplomats, Field Service men and newspapermen bound for Lisbon. In the smoking room, bar or cabin, the war was the sole subject of conversation. Germany was now rolling through the low countries and the steward came through frequently and gave us bulletins of their progress. We ran into bad weather and came down that night in Bermuda. It was very warm. I got through customs very quickly, probably because I had army identification cards, spent the night in the Belmont Manor, and took a trip around the city of Hamilton the next morning, looking the place over. A Canadian troop ship was in the harbor.

We took off again at two o'clock that afternoon and I slept on the plane. The Clippers had not yet been converted for greater freight and mail space

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by ripping out bunks and accommodations. On Monday morning we arrived at Horta in the Azores. We stayed a half-hour, and it was there that I learned that the Maginot Line had surrendered and the French Government was in flight. When we arrived in Lisbon at seven that night, France had all but fallen, although Paris was said to be holding.

The Clipper had gone far down the bay to its anchorage, and passengers went on to Lisbon by bus. Among them I had come to know two Stuyvesant brothers, whom I was to meet later in Syria when they were driving Field Service ambulances for the Free French. In spite of the fact that Lisbon was already beginning to crowd up to the bursting point, Pan-American Airways had been able to secure accommodations for us at the Hotel Metropole, and were successful in holding them. It resembled a small-town American hotel: a large lobby downstairs; no bar; but drinks could be served in easy chairs in the lobby.

The situation across the border looked blacker every minute, but come hell or high water, a French diplomatic attaché and I were determined to get to France. I inquired about the next train and learned that there would be one for Hendaye the following morning. While we were standing in

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the lobby, Robert Montgomery came in. He had been in Lisbon for several days trying to get a place on a plane New York bound. He joined the circle and everybody began talking to him at once to get the lay of the land and whatever information he had.

"How about Paris?" I asked him. "I want to get through to there, if I can."

He shook his head. "Better keep away from Paris," he said. "Things were pretty tough there when I left. The French were in a bad mood about Americans. They don't like us. They think we should have given them some help. They were reaching a point, when I left, where they may soon be shooting Americans in the streets."

I could not quite believe that. I thought I knew Frenchmen better, and told the clerk to get me up in time for the Hendaye train. I was dressed in civilian clothes, a dark blue suit, and had my uniform in my suitcase, the only piece of baggage I carried. There were regulations both in Portugal and Spain against foreigners wearing military uniforms. I went out, then, to look over the city of Lisbon — my first experience with an overcrowded, densely congested city, and one that was to be repeated often within the next few weeks. The hotel was so crowded that there were beds and cots in

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the lobby and in every hallway. Streets were jammed at all hours, as though Christmas and Easter shopping crowds had been combined in a big city and shuffled around to the wrong hours; but they were not shopping and they were not happy. Despair and tragedy had already stamped its lines on too many faces. There was enough to eat, apparently, for those who had the price to pay for food. Stores, shops and dining rooms were open and crowded, and the supply of wines and liquors seemed to be inexhaustible, but everything was very expensive.

I went to the station the next morning to board the train for Hendaye on the border between Spain and France, and had little trouble. I had French and Spanish visas in my passport. I was on that train for thirty-eight hours. I had my last meal just before the train crossed into Spain. At the Portuguese frontier, the dining car was taken off, and for the next thirty hours I had nothing to eat or drink, except a bottle of cheap wine. The destitution of ragged soldiers, and of men, women and children, along the road and at way-stations in Spain was appalling. Each stop was crowded with dirty, unshaven beggars, tatterdemalions in uniforms, stained, torn and faded, many of them not yet eighteen years old, pleading for money for the

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Spanish Civil War wounded — scenes that were sickening and depressing.

I thought these scenes would pass like a movie panorama and change into the pleasant, rustic pastorals of France when we rolled over the next frontier to Hendaye. Instead I found a once gay and carefree people walking around in a trance. National death had visited a national family, and the French people were dazed and lost, like a whole people suddenly affected by mass amnesia.

I got off the train in Hendaye, found a dining room and had a good substantial meal, stepped into a taxi and told the driver to take me to Biarritz, wondering all the while: "What has happened to the French people? Where is the spirit of 'Madelon'? The spirit of '14? What has happened to national morale?" It was a perfect setting for a modern Foch, a Clemenceau, or a Jeanne d'Arc. . . . I had not yet heard of de Gaulle.

Hendaye is only about twenty miles from Biarritz. I paid the driver off outside Cartier's, and met a handful of my friends there: *vendeurs* with whom I had competed for business, clerks, stenographers, designers — all that were left of the once big jewelry house. They were grim, depressed and bewildered. They did not know what was going on. Somewhere to the north of them were the Ger-

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mans, bearing down upon them inexorably. They did not know where the German Army was, or what was happening. Refugees were pouring in. Another city was crowding up, as though the German Army wielded a monstrous brush and swept all loose people into the South of France, raising a choking dust of panic in the very air.

Inside the store, I found my old friend, M. Farines, a director of the company. He had been demobilized. There was not space in a room, a closet or cupboard in the whole city, where I could sleep. People were sleeping three in a bed in small rooms, on billiard tables and on floors, and this remnant of proud Cartier's had made a home of the store. They took me in to share it with them. Food was scarce, but they had some stored in back of the store, and a *garçon* cooked in the cellar. There, too, was a radio, a small one, not too loud, where we gathered to hear the news bulletins.

We had bread and wine, and every day one of the staff went down to the waterfront, and bought fish from the fishermen, before it could be shipped to market. Food was scarce and already being rationed. Vegetables were hard to get, but the staff had found some. We were not yet under German domination. An armistice had not yet been signed.

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I stayed around for a couple of days, but it was a pull at my heartstrings to see my friends so helpless, and I was eating their food.

I decided to go to Bordeaux to look the situation over, and when I found French officers of high rank on the road, rushing South in automobiles with their families, running away from the German Army, I thought I knew now what was the matter with France, and I thought, too, that it would be a distinct pleasure to punch the nearest one of them on the nose.

Along the coast, I found a strange police force, policemen who had been moved from place to place all the way from Le Havre, doing guard duty and customs work, now many miles from their homes and families. Le Havre had been overrun by the German Army. The police were bitter and distraught, and had no other orders than to stick to their posts. This was characteristic of the mixed-up mess. Authority in all civil services seemed to have been suddenly beheaded. I went to the military office in Bordeaux and found that what Robert Montgomery had already told me was correct: that it was utterly impossible to find out there the location of any person or unit of the French armed forces. Records either did not exist or were

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so completely muddled that they were useless.

I had put my French Army uniform on for this trip, because I knew it would give me entrée to places where civilians would be barred, and I had a definite purpose. I wanted to get permission of any existing governmental authority to move valuables out of France and into England. I purposely refrain from going into detail here because, as this is written, the war is still on and I am quite certain that a German-controlled Vichy Government, which sentenced me to death, would like to know much more about those valuables. I reveal this much because it will now do them no good to question or torture any employee of Cartier's for information. This happened to be my personal venture, and nobody knows about it but me. If I am alive when the war is over, I will make my own personal adjustments.

I did not get permission to move valuables out of France. Communication to the north was now impossible. Government was practically disrupted, and already there was a Vichy tinge among those to whom I spoke. Bordeaux was even more crowded than Biarritz, if that were possible. Refugees were jamming the city more and more every hour. My uniform was accepted everywhere. People asked no questions, and were in such a mood for taking

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orders, from anybody, that I finally found it was easier to get about by stopping any car that happened to be passing and ordering the driver, preferably one in uniform who seemed to be running away, to take me where I wanted to go. Even that could not arouse the fire of antagonism among them. They complied meekly.

I dropped around to the American consular office to find out what was going on there, and learned that there was a ship sailing for England that afternoon, and that the Germans were now only six hours away. I went out on the street and felt as if I had a loge at the world's greatest drama. The crowd situation was becoming more acute by the minute, until within a few hours it would be unbearable. There were still thousands of Englishmen in Bordeaux. I went down to the pier and found it jammed with men, women, children and baggage. The Britishers were calm, silent stoics, grimly awaiting a civilian Dunkirk, looking at their watches, patiently awaiting rescue or capture. Until that day I never thought much of that English bromide: "Chin up! Carry on!" I'll never again smile when I hear it.

The last of the launches came in. A British Commanding Officer walked along the line and barked: "Only one bag to a person. No space for them" —

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and singled out an elderly lady with a baby in her arms and said, "You go first, Madam." She did; the rest followed as quietly and as orderly as though they were filing down a church aisle on Sunday.

The line disappeared over the edge into boats until the Commanding Officer and I were left alone at the end of the pier. "Are you going?" he asked me.

I shook my head. "Not me, I'm an American."

"So," he nodded cheerily, and looked at the bags. "Rum luck," he said, "to leave all those bags," — lifting his hands helplessly, — "but what can I do?"

I nodded toward a line of French spectators, matrons, taxi drivers, longshoremen, street urchins, girls and charwomen. "They'll probably know what to do with them," I suggested.

He nodded, looked at his watch and observed. "Well, the Jerries aren't far away now, are they? Best luck, son." And he went overside into the last boat.

I watched him go out to His Majesty's Ship and climb aboard, and almost immediately the boat was moving down the Channel. I felt a deep and profound respect for those Britishers. "If I ever find myself on a spot like this," I thought, "I hope my Government will come through as effectively."

By nightfall, the population of Bordeaux had more than trebled. I decided I had had enough of

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but with roads choked with refugees, stray and straggling military detachments, it was soon clear to me that it would take at least two days. People were trudging over the roads, cycling or inching along in automobiles. Main roads, side roads and fields were black with soldiers. I passed Polish regiments, which had recently been evacuated from Saint-Jean-de-Luz — and Belgians, determined to leave Port Vendre for North Africa. It was impossible to get perspective in this plodding, interminable river of human confusion. The baby in my charge was cared for because I had a gun, and I had become my own law in the manner of the wild and woolly West. I saw other hungry babies and hungry mothers along the road and they made my heart sick. I could do nothing for them. My mission was to get Françoise and her grandmother to Perpignan.

I delivered them there late the second afternoon, put the car in the garage, and a small staff of domestic servants set about quickly to prepare food for us. One of them turned on the radio and we heard that an armistice had been signed with the Germans, in a parlor car in the forest. Mme. Farines's shoulders sagged. Her eyes filled with tears and they coursed down her cheeks. She sobbed and went upstairs to her room — hungry, and tasting

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the dregs of humiliation. When sympathetic servants got her back to the table, we had omelettes and coffee, a salad of greens from the garden, and the baby had milk.

The next morning I kissed Françoise on the forehead, and said good-by to Mme. Farines. I left the Citroën in the garage, because I was sure M. Farines would prefer to have it there, and joined the horde of refugees on the road — and was lucky enough to thumb a ride with an American family that had an empty seat. Refugees were downhearted and discouraged, but they were a friendly and democratic lot, moving around, not knowing where they were going, or caring much.

In this car was an American widow and her two children. They had lived in France for many years. She was driving, and had no idea of where she wanted to go, except that she wanted to end the trip on the coast. Why she decided to get to Spain is something that I could not fathom, and as she did not volunteer explanations, I did not inquire. It was none of my business. Her problem was further complicated by a complete absence of passes, military or civil. I had French Army ambulance passes in my case, and I was sure that these were enough at least to get her to Biarritz on the coast. From there, she would be on her own. I took over

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the wheel to earn my passage and spent another night on the road in one of those anonymous little towns at the base of the Pyrenees.

Almost overnight, the refugee racketeer had sprung up: the small hotel men had never seen so many hungry and tired people in their lives before, and to them, these people were manna. They charged outrageous prices to permit people to sleep on dining-room tables or on the floor, and they made the prices of food almost prohibitive. Once again I slept in a car to make sure that it would not be stolen, and the next day we skirted the Pyrenees to Lourdes, Pau and on to Biarritz. I reported back to M. Farines, stayed overnight at the store; and the next day the Germans rolled in. We stood at the windows and watched a staff car glide up to the Hotel Miramar, a stone's-throw from us, and then another and another, and felt a sinking feeling. I'll never forget those faces inside the store, eyes glistening with tears, lips quivering and drawn down at the corners. They sighed and turned away, and soon a German officer came into the store, erect, efficient, but with a frozen face and cold steel eyes. He spoke French.

He wanted to know if we had any firearms, and searched the place anyway. He wanted to see what we had for stock, stones set and unset, valuable

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metals, gold and silver. He looked into the safes and vaults, but curiously there was very little on hand, scarcely enough, in fact, for a second-rate teething ring for Hitler. The officer was very nosy in an extremely polite way, and he was meticulously correct — disgustingly so. I had put away my uniform. It was back in my suitcase again, and I was ready to light out at a moment's notice. An official order had been issued banning all except German uniforms in occupied France. Even wounded soldiers in hospitals had to get into civilian clothes.

I stayed around for a week or so, curious to see what would happen now that the Germans were here. Sonny's Bar in the center of Biarritz was labeled "For Officers Only." It was a good restaurant. I had been in the habit of going there, and saw no reason to change, the more so because the Nazis banned all hoarding, and officially ordered that all food on hand must be served. The result was that restaurants piled on food, making a big pyramid of potatoes and vegetables on a plate, and of course were far more generous to Frenchmen, and friends of France, than to the Nazis. The Nazis were cute, though. They knew what they were doing with that order. So did we, but as there was no other way out, we reasoned that we might as well eat

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heavily in anticipation of the lean years to come.

The Casino was turned over to the German soldiers, and every day a German orchestra played for them on the balcony. It was made quite clear that French girls would be welcome, to dance with German soldiers. At first all girls spurned them and turned their heads the other way. Respectable girls continued to look upon them with loathing, but after a time a few of the prostitutes succumbed to the lure of good food. The appearance of Biarritz changed almost overnight. Soldiers there had control of the near-by frontier. There were about sixty or seventy officers, and perhaps 6000 men, all dressed in severe or snappy gray-green uniforms. Swastikas were flying from every flagstaff and a nine-o'clock curfew was ordered on Berlin time, an hour ahead of Biarritz time.

At the end of about a week, I had enough. I had seen France knuckle under, compelled to "say 'Uncle,' " and the spectacle was depressing and disgusting. There was no leader that the Frenchmen I knew in Biarritz looked up to any longer, or respected, within the environs of all France. We heard that Pétain was on the air and did not even bother to listen to him. Instead, for the first time, I began to hear about General de Gaulle. Until then, he had been a vague name in the news to me, a

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man who wrote a book in 1934, a book on mechanized warfare, which the Army of his own country had treated contemptuously, while the High Command of Germany made it their blueprint and manual. My information about him came gradually, and piecemeal. He was a great French general, whom the politicians had snubbed. He had favored a retreat by the Government to Africa. He would still fight to free France.

Radios had not yet been prohibited, but it was predicted that they would be. Already they were being hidden and Frenchmen were listening surreptitiously to broadcasts from England and the United States. General de Gaulle was the name on everybody's tongue, although it was whispered cautiously, and men were speculating on how to get to England and join him. Already there was a light in some young eyes that had been dark and defeated. I heard about de Gaulle in restaurants and bars, and in back rooms and basements. There were heated *sotto voce* discussions about him. Some even doubted that his name was really de Gaulle. The more I heard about him, the more I inclined to think that de Gaulle was my man. He had an idea, a plan, and he was skillful and experienced. I decided to go to England, to him, or to some of his responsible followers, and find out about him.

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I thumbed a ride to the border at Hendaye, and tried to nerve my way over, but was turned back by the German guard. I explained that I was an American, and pulled every rabbit that I had out of the hat; but it could not be done. I spent a couple of days there trying to find a way over that border, but it had me licked. While I was there, a whole German corps marched into Spain to parade for the people of San Sebastian, and the discovery that startled me was that it was not a muscle show or piece of saber-rattling. The people of San Sebastian wanted them, approved them, cheered them and applauded them; and these Spaniards were not acting — they meant it.

I went to Bordeaux and appealed to American Vice-Consul Douglas MacArthur, nephew of the General. I had my American passport with me, but he was deaf to any proposal to go to England. He told me to go home; that the *Manhattan* was sailing soon; and as this turned out to be the only way I could ever get across that Spanish border, I agreed. I became a member of a party of fifty American refugees, and by now I had come to hate the very word refugee. We were herded across the Spanish border and into hotels, but no guard was placed over us, and my problem was solved. We had the freedom of the city. I went out to look it over, and

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found myself footloose and free on the Spanish side of the frontier. I stayed with the party a little longer, though, and went on to Bilbao the next morning, where we joined a larger party of 700 or 800 Americans. Most of them had beaten the Nazis to the line within the past two or three weeks.

Among them I found the mother, wife and son of Steel Powers, and discovered that Steel was now in a Nazi concentration camp. About ninety per cent of the American Volunteer Ambulance drivers in France were in Bilbao. They were all through, convinced that France was licked and that the show was over. I tried to convert some of them to the Free French cause, and invited them to come along with me to England to look into it, but I could find no takers. At that point, I decided to take leave of the American refugees and go the rest of the way alone. I took the night train for Madrid, and the next night to Lisbon, and ran into my first hurdle at the Spanish–Portuguese frontier. When the border inspectors opened my suitcase, they found my French Army uniform, and I was whisked off the train and thrown into the border jail.

I was questioned by a half-dozen officials, and explained in French and English that I was an American; "What does this VA on the shoulder

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mean?" one of them asked, and surprised at his ignorance I explained that it meant Virginia Military Academy. "Virginia," I elaborated, "is a very important state in the United States." I told him that I was an ambulance driver leaving France, and finally prevailed upon one of them to call the American Consul in Madrid, at my expense, to inquire if there were not a number of American ambulance drivers leaving France. I knew that the only possible answer was "Yes," because there were two or three score of them coming behind me the next day. The man got the answer I expected, and released me from the jailhouse. I complimented him on his skillful diplomacy in so averting certain war with the United States, and took the next train out.

I went immediately to the British Embassy and met Cole Martin, a British military attaché, and told him that I wanted to go to England. He is a typical, red-faced Englishman in his mid-forties, soldierly and as erect as a ramrod. He wanted a report on what was going on in France in the cities and towns and places where I had been up to the time I left, and I gave it to him.

"Why do you want to go to England?" he asked.

"I have a letter to Eric Sevareid of the Columbia Broadcasting System," I said. "A director of the

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Columbia Broadcasting System gave it to me in New York. And I want to see this General de Gaulle. If de Gaulle is all that he's cracked up to be, I'll probably wind up by joining his army. If he's not, there's an outside chance I might get a job with CBS."

"I can't get you to England," he said.

"You can give me a visa, can't you?" I asked.

"I can do that," he said.

He stamped my passport and said, "That'll be six shillings, please." I dug down into my pocket and gave it to him.

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Chapter Eleven

HOW to get out of Lisbon and into England under certain circumstances is not a subject to be discussed publicly during the war. There is such a thing as an underground, and if there is a prospect that a man will fight for the Free French, he does not have to look far in any country before he finds out how it can be done. I was dirty, with a stubble of reddish-blonde beard covering my cheeks and chin, when I turned up at the Hotel Metropole, the same lobby that I had left only a month earlier. I was a refugee with about a hundred dollars in my pocket, a uniform in my bag and a few personal belongings, like toothbrush, paste, comb and a watch. When Cartier's fled Paris, they left my trunk and the rest of my personal effects there, and no doubt the Nazis have them now. When my hundred dollars was gone, I had no idea where I would get more. It was no longer

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easy to cable home or to get money transferred.

Lisbon was now a crowded hell with ragged soldiers lining the streets, and I wondered, as I looked at them, if this was a preview of what France was soon to become, but there were Frenchmen and Englishmen around the hotel, and I soon found out how to get to England. It would take a couple of weeks, and my problem was to survive until arrangements could be made.

I could not get a room at a hotel, or in any house or building. I could not even get room to sit down, let alone lie down, in a church, station, park bench or public place. There were so many people in Lisbon that at times it seemed as though there was not, in the whole city, room for one more person. I could not wait two weeks for a boat; there was no place to wait. I went into the office of one of the steamship lines and met Mr. E. A. H. Dawson and told him that I wanted to ship out right away for England. He shook his head and looked at me as though I had asked for the moon — and broke to me again, gently, the news that I had anticipated: that it would be a week or more before I could get a boat out. Like the Commanding Officer at the pier in Bordeaux, he looked at me with a sincere sympathy. I had not had anything to eat since I left the Portuguese frontier jail. I had had but

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little sleep in four days. My beard was even longer now. I was covered with soot and grime, and for the moment was a typical wartime international hobo. He was tall, dignified, clean, neat and well fed.

"I suppose you can't get anything to eat or a place to sleep, either," he said.

"That's right," I told him.

He thought it over a moment. "Come out to my house," he invited, "and I'll put you up."

I don't know what impulse actuated him. There was no reason why he should be so generous to a stranger, and an American. He had been besieged for days by refugees who had greater claim upon his sympathy than I did. He took me to his beautiful home at 1 Largo do Rilvas, presented me to his wife, and to one of the prettiest girls I have ever seen — his daughter Beryl, a year or two younger than I am.

Mrs. Dawson was cheerful, sympathetic and motherly. She had a son about my age, height and size. I had a bath, put on her son's clean underwear and clothing, shaved and came down to dinner, a new man, feeling much like the Biblical beggar picked up in the search of highways and byways to sit down at a feast. In that half-hour, my personal status had been transposed. I was dead tired, and Mrs. Dawson packed me off to bed, a luxury of

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paradise for me. I hadn't slept in a real bed for more than a month. I dropped off to sleep immediately and awakened about fifteen hours later, around noon the following day. I sat up. Warm sun was streaming through the window. I looked around the room and on a bedside table found some Portuguese money, and a note telling me to accept it with Mr. Dawson's compliments, and asking me not to be embarrassed about it.

When I came downstairs, I found Beryl waiting for me. We had luncheon, got in her car and drove over to the Estoril, the Riviera of Portugal; later that afternoon we met her father at the British Royalty Club for cocktails and tea. Every day for a week, Beryl and I went swimming, to the Portuguese exhibitions or dancing at the club. In Lisbon Bay were several American warships. We met American naval officers at the club, and I discovered that my cousin, Lieutenant Wyman H. Packard of the United States Navy, was in town. Beryl and I looked him up, and the meeting was a pleasant occasion for each of us. He gave me American cigarettes and enough money to pay back Mr. Dawson. I gave him my pocket watch, a gift to me from my parents on my twenty-first birthday, and asked him to see to it that it was returned to

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my home. I was afraid that I would lose it in the months to come.

I found, too, that the Duke and Duchess of Windsor were in town, and called upon them. They wanted to know all that had happened to me since I saw them last in Monte Carlo, and I brought a friendly oral message to the Duchess from her aunt, Mrs. Merryman, whom I had seen in Washington. The Duke and Duchess had escaped from France to Spain, and had come on to Lisbon. Their plans were as incomplete and as indefinite as my own. I visited my cousin, Wyman, aboard ship several times, and had him to dinner at the Dawsons'. Beryl and I got in a few sets of tennis every day. I was feeling in the pink of condition, well fed, and having a wonderful time, when I received a visit from a gentleman who told me that if I would present myself at a specified port, at a specified hour, and make my identity known, I would be given transportation by boat to England.

Beryl, the Dawsons and my cousin, Wyman, were urging me to go home on the *Manhattan,* due to arrive in a few days, but I had become committed to the cause of France. It was now a matter of principle with me. In Perpignan, where I delivered a grandmother and infant child to their home; in Biarritz, where I had seen German soldiers

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march in, take over and humiliate my French friends in Cartier's; in Bordeaux, where I had seen stoic Englishmen throw their baggage away uncomplainingly, and go aboard a boat; and even here, where the English Dawsons had been so kind to me, for no good reason, I had been arriving at a frame of mind where I felt that I would be running away from something by going back to the United States.

A life of peace and comfort and the security of my own country were attractive; but the notion plagued me that it would not be honest or fair to accept them. I had seen French officers of high rank, with their wives and families in staff cars, running away from something and searching for a mirage security. That something was the cruelty, the seeming invincibility and the menace of the Nazi war machine. My own countrymen, I thought, were running away from something, too. Isolationists were finding security by hiding their heads in the sand. All America, to my mind, at that time, was a moral runaway. I felt that I had to stay and face it.

I stood on a pier again and watched the *Manhattan* crowding to the gunwales; said good-by to ambulance drivers, friends and casual acquaintances, and knew as I did so that I was watching my

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own bridge burn. The *Manhattan*, I was sure, would be my last link with the United States for a long time to come. Beryl and I watched it depart, had a final evening dancing at the club. I shook hands with the Dawsons the next day, promised to come back and see them when it was over — a promise that I will keep if it is possible — and left three of the nicest persons I have ever met.

I reported at the time and place as directed and found myself aboard a 150-ton cargo boat bound for England.

Those weeks and months were always a nightmare of crowds — desperate, oppressive crowds; crowds searching for an elusive safety that was always in some other city or in some other direction; crowds who arrived at a destination and immediately picked another one; crowds running from dive bombers hundreds of miles behind them; crowds running from homes that had been blown up; crowds without leaders or direction. They came from everywhere and they came from nowhere — always wondering whether they would have been safer where they had been, were safer where they were at the moment, or would be safer at some other place farther on; searching, searching, searching always, for a phantom place that did not exist,

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restless, hopeless, pursued by a terror known or unknown. Sometimes I felt like slapping their faces, whirling them around and kicking their bottoms, saying: "Go back and face it. You'll never escape it this way. Fight it. Fight it with your bare hands if you have to. It's better to die fighting than to die in the last corner of the earth, exhausted, cornered and starved. If my time ever comes, I'll run toward it — not from it. That's what every American is taught in every field of sport: rush in and hit him in the prize ring; dive in and tackle him on the football field. Get in there and pitch, or punch, or fight. You're not licked until you run away from it. Therefore, if you never run from it, you're never licked."

But you couldn't reason with these crowds. You couldn't give them a fight talk or a pep talk. You felt terribly sorry for some of them; suspicious that many of them were spies and fifth columnists, and morale disrupters — and contemptuous of most of them.

The *Avoceta* was another crowded cargo ship with scant accommodations for the ordinary natural processes of nature, its decks and hull full of refugees. There were Poles among them, who claimed to be government officials. I wouldn't know. There was a delegation of Englishmen and

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Englishwomen from the Geneva Labor Office, a number of Belgians and a scattering few American airplane mechanics. Within twelve or fifteen hours we were in Gibraltar, and for six long days we were imprisoned on that ship while we waited for a convoy from South Africa. Hundreds of small craft came in and out of the bay while we were there, and we could watch them from the rail, and pace a few hundred steps around the deck and watch them again. Italian bombers flew over one day to drop a few crates of explosive eggs on the fortress. I sat on the upper deck, in a grandstand seat, as though watching a game. Objectives were the water supply, the big, broad and wide concrete rain basin on the side of the rock, and the defenses of the rock, but the bombs fell harmlessly in the water or on the beach. As I looked on, I thought, "That is probably the rottenest timing and the worst marksmanship I ever saw," and I decided that the Italians couldn't hit a barn door at ten paces. Some of the bombs dropped close to the convent of the Loretto nuns from Dublin, and the next day the nuns were evacuated and came aboard the *Avoceta*. That night we listened to the Rome radio broadcasting a news report in English, and we were amused to discover that the *Ark Royal* had been sunk in that raid. We could see

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the *Ark Royal* riding at anchor, untouched and unscathed, through the nearest porthole.

There was no blackout of Gibraltar, because it would have been useless. The lights from Spanish towns on the opposite shore threw the whole place into bold relief, and it was a paradox that Spanish towns, friendly to the Axis, were considering blacking themselves out, not to protect Gibraltar, but to save their own skins from atrocious Italian marksmanship. More and more evacuées piled into the boat as we waited for the convoy, until it seemed that the very hull must bulge to accommodate them. Of the evacuées, the Loretto nuns were the most welcome, because they were cheerful Irishwomen, unexpectedly so in spite of the somber cloth habits of their order. Their peaceful demeanor, their unfailing smiles and words of comfort for men, women and children huddled in the hold, were a tonic for morale. If the nuns were afraid, they did not show it. They were examples for all of the timid around them.

In peacetime, the *Avoceta* had been a banana-carrying ship, and the holds had never been cleaned. The odor of bananas permeated them, and it was impossible to bring fresh air to the evacuées who suffered there. Many of them were painfully sick, and the lack of hygienic accommodations made

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matters worse. I had a bunk. The Mother Superior of the Loretto nuns, an angelic, kindly person, was in the hold. I told her I would feel better if she would take my bunk. She did, and in appreciation she said she would remember me in her prayers until I returned safely home. Letters from that saintly woman have followed me around the earth. Since that day I have had a number of miraculous escapes from death. Some of them I can never understand. It may be my own lucky star that always seemed to be shining up there somewhere. It may have been the prayers of the Mother Superior, or the fact that I was blessed by Pope Pius XI; or it may have been the prayers of a Jewish rabbi, who promised to remember me forever, too. At any rate, her prophecy was fulfilled.

In this filthy, floating hulk on the North Atlantic, a baby boy was born. The mother was given a bunk, and several women aboard, who were experienced in these matters, turned to and gave a hand. At that time I had joined the submarine watch, scanning the Atlantic and the horizon for anything that might appear to be suspicious. What strange auspices, I thought, for a child coming into the world. For the rest of the journey, I slept on deck.

There was food aboard the ship, but it was of

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poor quality and badly cooked. Ten or twelve American passengers took over the commissary department. One of them knew something about cooking, and the rest of us were at least nimble enough to get around the decks, and up and down in the holds, and serve it. It had never been very nourishing, but after that it was palatable. Submarine lookout duty during the day was hard on the eyes. There were no sun-glasses to take the painful glare from the reflection in the water, but only once were we apprehensive. The *Avoceta* plowed through a wide patch of oil that grew heavier and thicker toward the center, where floating coal-dust appeared, and we presumed that this was all that was left of an English merchantman sunk the night before. The sub, we knew, could not be far off, and the destroyers in our convoy were circling and zigzagging, trying to pick up a trace of her. There was some comfort in the presence of those ships of the Royal Navy.

While I was on watch at twilight, I saw a tall spurt of water in the distance, like a whale blowing off, not far from one of the destroyers. It must have been ten miles off, but it was impossible to see what was going on. Several seconds later, the *Avoceta* gave a terrific jerk and a long roll. This was repeated at intervals — twice, three times, four

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times. In a little while, the water seemed to be boiling, and we knew that depth charges had done their work. Another submarine would never again torpedo a ship. We made port in southwestern England, and arrived just in time for an air raid. Men kept working at the pier unloading supplies from ships even as bombs were dropping. I went ashore and arrived in London on the night of August 5.

I had come up by train from the southwestern port with Jack Burton of York, Pennsylvania, a Y.M.C.A. worker assigned to war relief work. There were few passengers when we left, but by the time we arrived in Victoria Station the train was crowded with men and women in uniform, picked up at successive stops along the line. The station itself was jammed with soldiers.

It was a clear, fine evening. Burton and I went to the Palace Hotel, checked in, and had no trouble getting a room. We had our first real meal in weeks: mutton, vegetables and coffee. I telephoned Etienne Bellenger, chairman of the board of Cartier's in London. Bellenger was the victim in the celebrated "Mayfair Case" in London a few years earlier. He had been waylaid by thugs, an American and three Englishmen, clubbed upon the head, robbed of a large number of jewels he was carry-

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ing, and was left for dead in the Mayfair Hotel. The case attracted wide newspaper attention because the defendants had been given twenty years and the "cat," or lash, one for each year of the sentence.

It was about ten o'clock at night. M. Bellenger came to the phone and, at first, could not believe that I was in London. "Jacques," he protested, "you can't be here. You are in Finland." That was the last news he had had of me. I assured him that I was really in the city, and he invited me to come around early next morning to the store at 175 New Bond Street. I went out to a night club, the Café Anglais, where a floor show, music and dancing were designed to take the minds of people off the war, and enjoyed the show. It had been a long time since I had access to choice of a variety of food, or had seen pretty girls in a chorus line. I turned in that night and slept like a child, and weeks later felt as if I had lost a pleasant and promising friend when I heard that the Café Anglais had been bombed while the show was going on. It was crowded then and scores of guests had been killed.

Early next morning, I called on M. Bellenger and he had me check out of the hotel and come to his place in Putney, just outside London, to live.

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I told him that my plans were vague; that sooner or later, I would like to meet General de Gaulle, and he told me to take life easy and play for a while. Bellenger himself was one of the very first recruits to the Free French movement, an enthusiastic supporter, and close personal friend, of de Gaulle. I took his advice and rested in London, called upon a few personal friends I knew there, among them Jo-Jo Stockholm, who had been evacuated from Brest. He was now in the British Army, and on twenty-four-hour leave, and we did the town. London was the refuge of all Europe then, and I found friends I knew on streets and corners, in shops, bars and cocktail lounges. Maude Williams was playing in "Me and My Girl," featuring the Lambeth Walk. I had known her when she was in the Casino de Paris. I looked her up, and each night after the show we made a twosome doing the night clubs. Under the law, all such places had to close at twelve o'clock, but Maude knew a number of "bottle parties," where I found that everybody was in uniform.

An officer in the British Intelligence Corps, whom I had known in France, came to M. Bellenger and asked him to have me go into that service in France. Later, he talked to me and suggested that I go into the corps and return to France. In spite

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of the fact that the Mata Haris have glamorized the profession, spying is a distasteful and deceitful business, although somebody has to do it. I did not like the idea and turned to M. Bellenger for advice. "How do you feel about it?" he asked me. I told him. "If I felt that way about it, I wouldn't do it," he said. I turned it down.

M. Bellenger knew that I wanted to meet General de Gaulle, and on the night of August 9 he asked me not to go out, but to stay home and have dinner. He gave me no reason, but when I came downstairs I found that General and Mme. de Gaulle and their daughter were guests.

As I came into the room, I looked upon a very tall man, exceptionally tall for a Frenchman. He wore the khaki uniform of a French Army General, with gold braid on his shoulders and oak leaves on his kepi, two stars on his tunic sleeves indicating his rank; but his chest was bare of the medals and decorations that had been awarded him. His hair was black and still thick, with no trace of gray, and he had a small, closely trimmed mustache. Mme. de Gaulle was a typical Frenchwoman, with a pleasing, gracious manner. Like most French matrons, she wore black as though she had been long accustomed to it. She was short, and the General towered head and shoulders above her. His

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daughter was tall and resembled her father in appearance and build. Standing close to the General, I could see the marks on his tunic where he had removed his medals — I supposed as a symbol, and presumed that he would not wear them again until France was free; but it was a delicate point that I was in no position to inquire about. M. Bellenger presented me and I joined them for cocktails. I was in the uniform of the Ambulance Corps, and stood at attention until the General put me at ease. He had never seen this uniform before; he inquired about it, and I explained it. He wanted to know what had happened to the Corps after the fall of France, and I gave him a brief account of it, told him I had just left France, and that I was at present unattached. He was curious to know whether such a corps might now continue its work in England, and I said I did not think so. "At least," I explained, "there is no immediate indication of it. I've already called at Ambassador Kennedy's office and talked with one of the attachés, and was told that there is not now such a thing, and no prospect of one being formed. The Ambassador's office showed little interest in it."

We sat down to dinner, M. Bellenger at one end of the table, Mme. Bellenger at the other; the General at my right and his wife and daughter

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facing us. We had a substantial meal, cooked in French style, with French wine that was a treat to the General, his family, and to me. He was easy and friendly and talked casually throughout the dinner of the Free French movement, but there was a quiet, sincere determination underlying his conversation. There was nothing oratorical or boastful about his statement that because of the Free French movement, all Frenchmen everywhere could lift up their heads again.

"Or, at least I hope that will be true," he amended. "Jacques, we have done nothing yet. We have got to prove ourselves. Where will we be a year from now? Then we will know for certain whether we can lift up our heads." He was quiet and thoughtful as he broke bread, and he spoke with careful deliberation. I did not have much to say. He asked me again about France, exactly how I got out of there, the difficulties I experienced at borders, and the state of morale in Biarritz and Bordeaux, as I had observed it.

M. Bellenger filled in details of the organization of the Free French forces in England, but although both knew I was loyal to France, I was still an American, and they were cautious. There were no statistics or figures, no idea of how many Frenchmen were already enrolled in the Free French

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forces, and no indication of immediate plans to employ them. Great Britain had pledged its support to a French national committee, headed by General de Gaulle, and he had been broadcasting to Frenchmen everywhere, to continue resisting the Germans. He had been Undersecretary of War in the Reynaud cabinet. The Pétain government had already demoted him, and marked him up for "the earliest possible court martial."

He had already clarified his own position before the world in a statement saying that his committee did not wish to become the government of France. Its primary object was to form a Foreign Legion, backed up by the British Government, and to persuade the French colonies to fight on against the German and Italian forces. Britain had not broken with the Vichy Government, and had recognized de Gaulle only as leader of the French outside France.

In broadcasts to Frenchmen in German-occupied territory he had said: "It is your duty, if compelled to work for the enemy, to offer passive resistance by all the means in your power. It must never happen that Frenchmen, either directly or indirectly, should help to forge weapons which may kill other sons of France. I invite you to join us. It is your duty to do so. Do not place the orders of a

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discredited authority before your sacred obligation to fight for the salvation of France."

A few days before I arrived in England, on August 2, General Charles de Gaulle had been condemned to death, and technically he was scheduled to be tried at Riom on the day before I met him, August 8. He had answered Vichy over a British Broadcasting Company station by saying, "The sentence is that of a court largely under the influence, and possibly even under the direct orders, of the common enemy. The enemy will one day be driven from the soil of France. On that day I will submit myself willingly to the judgment of the people."

He showed no concern, that night at the dinner table, over the sentence of death, or the spurious trial. He was interested, instead, in a proposed plebiscite in Oceania, Moorea and Tuamotu in the Southern Pacific, to decide whether they would give their allegiance to Vichy or to the Free French. A few days later, when the votes were counted, there were 5564 for de Gaulle and 18 for Marshal Pétain. Support for him was already growing in Africa.

Throughout the evening I was greatly impressed by the General. He was honest and straightforward, his confidence in the French soldier still unshaken. He saw the Free French as crusaders in the armies

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of the democracies, certain that one day they would help free his native land. He did not try to proselytize, or "sell" me the Free French movement. He did not ask for aid or assistance of any kind. He was a pleasant dinner companion, who could not unshoulder for a moment the heavy burden of a problem that weighed down upon him.

He left at about ten o'clock with his wife and daughter. I had been with him only three hours and he had talked briefly of the war, the French soldier, the people of France and the Free French movement, and we probably spent far more time discussing the Free French Boy Scout movement in England, the camps and facilities for training young Frenchmen between the ages of twelve and fourteen. He was looking forward to visiting a few of these camps in Southern England.

When General de Gaulle had gone, I turned to M. Bellenger and asked, "How do I get into the Free French Army?"

"You'd better think that over very carefully," he counseled. "It isn't a decision to be made impulsively and on the spur of the moment. There are complications. The policy of the United States is opposed to American citizens as combatants. You were an ambulance driver in France — a noncombatant. Why not remain a noncombatant and drive

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GENERAL AND MME. CHARLES DE GAULLE WHILE IN ENGLAND

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an ambulance for Free France if you are determined to help?"

The next day I returned to the American Embassy to find out how I would stand if I enlisted, and discovered that I would lose my American citizenship if I joined the Free French forces. There was, as yet, no American Volunteer Ambulance Corps with the Free French. The only noncombatant unit was the Free French medical transport section. I returned to Cartier's, talked it over with M. Bellenger and with some of my English friends, and decided to join up.

I went to Free French Headquarters at 4 Carlton Gardens with a card from M. Bellenger to get me through the office staff to Major Fouchaud. It was a big building with a staff of clerks working on the main floor, and an information desk handy. I presented my card there and was shown to the Major. He was sitting behind a desk in an office — a man of medium size with black mustache, glasses and thinning dark hair. He was in uniform and was wearing his medals. He was prepared for me, and had already talked on the telephone with M. Bellenger. He acknowledged the card as I told him I wanted to join up, and he instructed me to write a letter to General de Gaulle. I did so. He accepted

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it, and appended to it his own personal recommendation that I be accepted as a second lieutenant in the transport section. My letter of application had outlined my experience in France and in Finland. The letter went through, with his endorsement, to General de Gaulle, and was immediately investigated to conform to Army regulations. On the day that it was filed, I was notified that I had been accepted.

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Chapter Twelve

I WAS directed to report at Olympia, a suburb of London, for my uniform and equipment, and was issued a battle dress uniform — similar, for utility purposes, to the fatigue uniform of the American Army. Free French officers, like those of any army, buy their own dress uniforms. I had my own American Volunteer Ambulance Corps uniform altered and renovated to conform to the Free French design. I was stationed temporarily in London and could live with the Bellengers in Putney. For a time I did recruiting work, trying to enlist other Americans and Frenchmen to drive ambulances.

Among the French, most of my prospects were men who had come out of Dunkirk, and I found a bitter reluctance to serve ever again under any French officer, a handicap that it was almost impossible to overcome. They had lost confidence in

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their officers, and had no respect for them. They were quartered in White City, in a stadium and race track. General Spears was in command, and a Colonel Williams, under him, was liaison officer between the Free French and the British Armies. I went to White City to try my luck recruiting there, but Colonel Williams lost patience with them entirely, and told them contemptuously to go home.

My tour of duty as a recruiting officer ended abruptly, and I was assigned to Aldershot for training in a Free French camp there, but as there was no ambulance work to be done, I was invited by Free French Foreign Legion officers to train with the infantry, for the purpose of keeping in condition, until a medical unit and ambulances materialized. This was purely unofficial, voluntary on my part, and a courtesy on theirs. The infantry of the Free French Foreign Legion had come down into Brest from Norway after campaigns in Narvik and Trondheim. Their commander was Colonel "Montclar," a fictitious name. Nobody knew his real name. They had fought a rear-guard action in Brest, and came into England by way of Liverpool.

The manner in which they came to the Free French was simple and dramatic. Colonel Montclar

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and his men had heard de Gaulle's appeal to all Frenchmen to join him. Colonel Montclar lined them up on the parade ground and said: "We're joining de Gaulle's Free French forces. Has anybody got anything to say about it?"

Nobody had anything to say about it, and they were the first fighting unit with the Free French, a corps of about 1200 trained troops, the first to start the avalanche of troops joining the Free French forces.

In the Aldershot camp there were the usual rumors and gossip, common to every army camp. We knew that one day soon we would be sailing for a destination unknown to us. I heard more about de Gaulle, learned more about him, and had a keen curiosity about him, because we were fairly certain that he would lead the expedition though we were not the army that he had dreamed of, when he was a prophet without honor in his own country, and wrote *Vers l'Armée de Métier,* the handbook for blitzkrieg and mechanical warfare which his own army generals scorned, while the German High Command seized upon it avidly, adopted it, and put it into operation.

Born in Lille, November 22, 1890, he had been a student in Paris, where his father was professor of

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philosophy and literature at the Catholic Institute. He was an honor man at Saint-Cyr, the French West Point, and upon his graduation in 1911, was assigned as second lieutenant of infantry in a regiment commanded by Colonel Pétain, later to become Chief Marshal. He was at the front from the very beginning of the first World War, at the Marne when Paris, first threatened by Germans, was saved by the "taxi-cab army." He was wounded three times, decorated for bravery; and in 1916, wounded at Douaumont, was captured by the Germans. He made three attempts to escape, one by digging a tunnel with a small nail file. He was caught, disguised in a German uniform, and spent the rest of the war in solitary confinement.

He was a soldier's soldier, tall, long-legged, silent. The French Army had been his life. After the war, in 1920 and 1921, he had been a member of a French military mission to Poland during the anti-Bolshevik campaign. He was Chief of Staff of the French Army of Occupation of the Rhine at Trier, and was on the general staff of the Army of the Orient in Syria. A favorite of Commander in Chief Pétain, he was never a favorite of Weygand, who succeeded Pétain. During the early 1930's, he was a member of the Superior Council of National

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Defense, and his colleagues got the impression that he had tanks on the brain.

In his book de Gaulle had outlined, and all but blue-printed, the Panzer division and its possible maneuvers; but the only praise for it came from German General Kurt Guderland, chief of the Tank Corps, who thanked de Gaulle for it in a German military magazine, adopted it, put it into operation, began training men in the de Gaulle pattern, and perfected it to invade France. General de Gaulle had tried to awaken his own War Office to the threat, but was brushed aside. As late as January, 1940, he had protested to the War Office that in the face of the German development of his idea, French Army officers were still employing the ancient maneuvering system invented by Carnot and Napoleon, at a time when muskets fired two rounds a minute. He warned that the Maginot Line could be broken. But his warning fell on deaf ears. After the German break-through he was given the stars of a General in a quick, brief ceremony, and dispatched hurriedly to Abbeville to defend it with 20,000 men and 600 tanks.

Recognition for de Gaulle and an awakening of the French High Command had come too late. Abbeville was the only French success of the war.

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General de Gaulle was able to meet and shunt aside a blitzkrieg, and was cited, belatedly, by Weygand, as an admirable, audacious, and energetic leader. Three weeks later, the French Third Republic had fallen, and General de Gaulle was the only audacious, energetic leader to continue the fight, even though he had to go to England to do it. The rest had bowed their heads, and knuckled-under in defeat — at a time when de Gaulle felt they should retreat to Africa and never give up. General de Gaulle, the unconquered, was characterized as "a rebel in England," and Vichy ruled that he was a deserter and should be shot.

Of course de Gaulle had never been liked by the smug, contented and complacent officers of the French Old Guard. He was a disturber, with new ideas that annoyed and irritated them. He was too modern. He wanted to improve the ancient profession of arms. He wanted to upset the old, tried and true military patterns. He wanted to streamline the Army, and made suggestions that brass hats thought were preposterous; and when they refused to listen, he looked at them grimly and preached doom. They seemed to think he was a strange, restless man, with a passion for overestimating German arms, skill, airplanes, and mechanized equipment, and discovered in tragedy that he had been

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a military John the Baptist, preaching in a French wilderness of indifference.

Charles de Gaulle was never underrated in England. He was greeted with open arms by the British military, not entirely because they saw in him a determined personality who could rally the Free French in colonies and neutral countries, but because they appreciated him as a strategist who had been far ahead of his time, and they could use his advanced ideas in military councils. But de Gaulle had remained in France until the last minute. On June 6, Premier Paul Reynaud chose him as special assistant in the War Ministry. On June 16, when Pétain took over, he kept de Gaulle there, but when the French Government sued for peace terms, the General left France in righteous anger. He would never submit to seeing France humbled.

This is the man in whom we, of the Free French Foreign Legion, placed our trust to lead us back to the Promised Land. We felt that we were in good, competent hands. We had complete confidence in him. Two letters and a memorandum had been drawn up and signed by Prime Minister Winston Churchill and General de Gaulle, and these constituted an agreement that the Free French Forces would never take up arms against France.

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Among the soldiers in Aldershot, these diplomatic moves attracted only cursory, passing attention. I read about them in the London newspapers, and so did my new friends in the Foreign Legion. We were more vitally interested in when we would be on the move, and where we would be going. I was more personally interested in the daily indoctrination of the Legion, trying to absorb quickly the practices and courtesies of an army that was still strange to me — a technique that I found I would have to learn by observation, because there were no training schools designed for officers already commissioned and in service. My brother officers were aware of my deficiencies and the reasons for them. They straightened out kinks in procedure that were confusing to me, co-operated and helped me over the early hurdles.

The first thing that impressed me was the complete anonymity of officers and men of the Legion, the total effacement of their personal backgrounds. I had read about it. I had seen it dramatized in movies. I had a normal, natural and American idea that it was greatly exaggerated, and was at first disconcerted to find that it was stark truth. Within the first week it was impressed upon me that I would never have an intimate friend in the Foreign

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Legion. Nobody was interested in what I had been, or done, before joining the Legion. Conversational preludes that referred even to my recent past were left dangling. Volunteered personal information brought no encouraging response. Invitations to chummy friendship were tactfully rejected. In all my service, I was to find that I would never know a single officer or soldier nearly as well as I had known passenger-ship acquaintances, or men whom I had met on a transcontinental train trip across the United States.

That tradition was ironclad. All that was known of background were the bare statistics on a service record, age, nationality, education, degrees, next of kin. Brother officers and soldiers in the ranks might be murderers, fugitives, adventurers, or solid respectable citizens. A member did not inquire about another's past, or brag or complain about his own. There was only the common past, dating from the beginning of service with the Legion, and the current experience for valid conversational material.

On the afternoon of August 29, Assembly sounded, the Legion lined up on the parade ground in Aldershot. Lieutenant Colonel Amilakvari faced his command, and ordered us to pack, saying that we were to move that night on orders of General de Gaulle. No destination was given. All that we

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knew was that we would leave by train — an obvious deduction, because cars were already being rolled along the siding.

After mess, when darkness fell that night, the dull, irregular throb of motors sounded high above us in the blackout, and suddenly the city of London seemed to be erupting. The ground shook under our feet. Crashing, booming and banging reverberated in the distance, and in a few minutes ear-splitting cracks, and the quick, brilliant flares of explosions, were all around us. The sky around London was reddening, and as we looked around, flames broke out around our camp in Aldershot. "The blitz" was on, and London was receiving its first baptism of bombs.

Aldershot was naturally a military objective, and as we stood on the platform, boarding trains, we were silent and tense. There were no cigarettes, no lights, and the silence after each shattering blast was intense, until it was broken by the clap of ack-acks going into action. Smoke from burning buildings enveloped us, an acrid smell that we could taste. We crowded into cars and looked out windows to see flames licking the skies all around us. Men were cursing the Germans. The train jerked. We moved slowly, picked up speed and sped away from the burning city. For miles, we could see

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the red sky, and we felt angry and frustrated. Hours later, the train puffed slowly to a stop. We got out and found that we were in Liverpool.

We stood around, waiting for the dawn, and gradually the faint morning twilight revealed fifteen large liners outlined in the harbor. All had been passenger ships and were converted into troop transports. Most of them had been of Dutch registry. Throughout the day, we boarded them, and with the recollection of last night still fresh in our minds, we were always looking aloft. Whether the Germans had learned that we were leaving Aldershot that night, I do not know; but I was interested in their propaganda report that we had evacuated and run away from Aldershot because of the blitz.

We remained in the harbor throughout the day, and I found that I was on the transport flagship with General de Gaulle. The General's headquarters had been part of the executive suite aboard the ship. Officers were quartered in staterooms, four to a room, and my companions were infantry lieutenants. We had not yet been informed of our destination, and presumed that we were probably going to Africa. Men were quartered below, in what had been third class and steerage. Organization had been completed before we arrived. Mess

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details were assigned, and feeding arrangements were announced.

We were anchored in the Channel, waiting for nightfall, and outside the harbor convoy ships were riding at their stations. The moon was bright and the night was clear when we moved silently out of the harbor, and steered a course northward under heavy convoy, steaming up the North Sea toward Scapa Flow. The convoy was made up of a large part of the British Navy, augmented by two destroyers and a cruiser from the French Navy. I never learned the circumstances under which the French ships came to the British Navy. It is possible that they had been in English ports when France capitulated.

There were so many ships in the convoy that I could see neither the leading ship nor the last. We moved in silence, in blackout and under strict discipline. There could be no lights or cigarette-smoking after dark. We rounded the British Isles on the north, steamed due east and then south toward the Azores. All of the ships were battle gray, and all identifying marks had been obliterated. It was a slow, tedious voyage in tightly cramped quarters for both officers and men. Flanked by convoy ships we felt safe and secure, not even curious enough now to look skyward for planes.

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We were certain that an alert lookout was now maintained on convoy ships, and felt that our first intimation of action would come when a convoy opened fire. We had an airplane carrier. Scouting planes were over our heads frequently throughout the day, and I had felt far more apprehensive aboard the *Norma* in the North Sea than I did aboard the transport.

General de Gaulle appeared on the bridge, or took an occasional constitutional on deck. Cameras of Signal Corps and officers clicked frequently throughout the day, snapping him, the convoy, or scenes of interest aboard ship; and there were frequent conferences of high-ranking officers, both in the Legion and among the British Naval command, in the General's office. Lower-ranking officers, noncoms, and the men knew that something important was brewing, and speculated on it, but most of us were wrong.

The days stretched into a week, and a week into a fortnight, and we were still plowing south. As we got deeper and deeper into the South Atlantic, we became more confident. Distance made airplane attack less and less possible. Our naval convoy was too strong for attack by units of the German Navy. Submarines were the only menace and the Navy

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was watchful. We had daily submarine drills, and were assigned stations in case of emergency, and training, within limitations, continued aboard ship, although there were no heroics, no speeches and no pep meetings.

On the morning of September 23, we arrived off Dakar. We remained several miles off the coast, out of range of shore batteries, riding easily on ground swells. It was bright and sunny, with visibility so clear that we could see the jetties of the harbor, the low outline of the warehouse and the distant short skyline of the city. We were not told what was going on, but the ship was alive with *sotto voce* speculation. We anticipated action.

Soldiers remained below. Officers were on deck, and there had been a conference in General de Gaulle's cabin since early morning. It continued for several hours, and finally an aide came out and gave a nod and a signal to sailors standing by davits. A motor launch was dropped, and Captain de Fregate D'Argenlieu, a Roman Catholic priest, later in charge of the Free French in the Pacific, Captain Gotscho, Captain Perrin, and Captain Descort Foch, grandson of the first World War Marshal, left de Gaulle's cabin. They were grim and serious as they walked along the deck to the gangway.

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They looked as if they had been given their orders and were about to execute them.

A white flag of truce and a French flag had been raised on the motor launch, and the quartet walked down the steps and stepped into it. The launch chugged away from the transport toward the two jetties that formed the harbor. We stood on deck and watched it curiously. It moved away, closer to the shore, and when it had covered about half the distance, there were white puffs on the shore; water spurted up around the launch, and seconds later, the faint reverberation of shelling came across the water to us, and there were disappointment and consternation among the officers on deck. The launch was under fire, and it was clear that a plan had gone wrong.

The shelling continued. Spurts in the water came closer to the launch as gunners found range. One shell almost upset it, and we saw two of the officers slump in their seats. The launch zigzagged for a moment indecisively, and apparently an order was given. The tillerman threw the rudder over; the boat described a semicircle and headed back for our ship.

The shelling stopped, and the launch slowly approached the boat. When it came alongside, the priest, Captain D'Argenlieu and Captain Perrin

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were stretched out on the bottom as sailors tried to give First Aid. They were lifted out. Doctors and attendants were on deck with stretchers. The wounded officers were carried up the gangway, and rushed to the sick bay. We were told that they were seriously wounded.

Officers and men were close-jawed and burning with indignation. It was not like the French to fire upon their own flag and a flag of truce. No explanations were given.

General de Gaulle went to the radio room and appealed to the French people in Dakar and the natives of Senegal. In clear, sincere and straightforward language, he analyzed the whole situation for them. He told them they had an opportunity to help redeem France, and asked for their support. He said it was not right for patriotic Frenchmen to be firing upon patriotic Frenchmen, and that if they would think it over, and talk it over, if they would discuss it with him or with a delegation of Free French officers, he was certain they would reach an honorable agreement. "We have come to help you, not to attack or conquer you," he said. "We have stocks of food and supplies. We brought them here for you, because you are Frenchmen, and we know you need them. This food is not a bribe or a weapon. It is our contribution to our own suf-

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fering people. You are not helping France by rejecting my overtures or firing upon your own friends. You are playing into the hands of an enemy that holds your native land in bondage. Let us get together and talk this problem over, even if, in the beginning, we must talk it over by radio."

He remained in the room as the operator tuned in on Dakar, waiting for a response. An hour passed and there was none. The General tried again, and again, but there was no answering voice on the radio. At last, he spoke into the radio, crisply, firmly, and with a ring of determination that meant business. "I am addressing myself now," he said, "to Governor Boisseau in person," and this time he recounted his previous attempts to talk with the people of Dakar under terms of truce. He said that the Free French Forces had come to Dakar in a spirit of friendliness, escorted by powerful English naval units. "France deserves your loyalty and co-operation," he said. "As a French soldier, I should hate to use this overwhelming naval force to compel you to give to France the loyalty and co-operation you should give voluntarily. If you do not answer, I have no other alternative."

Again he waited, and when there was no response, he delivered an ultimatum, specifying a time limit, saying that if he had not heard from the Governor

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when the time had expired, the British Navy would open fire.

Shortly before the time limit expired, three planes took off from the aircraft carrier, circled above us and flew toward Dakar in V-formation as a warning. Officers and observers stood on the deck observing them, curious as to the effect upon natives and the French warships in the harbor; and even as we watched, antiaircraft batteries on the French warship *Richelieu*, and shore batteries, went into operation. The sharp clapping of ack-acks echoed across the water, and we knew that naval and military action must now begin. The planes had not gained much altitude, and were perhaps five to seven thousand feet in the air. One of them shook. Smoke poured from it and it dived to the ground. Another fluttered crazily a moment. Pilot and observer baled out, their white, silk parachutes opening with a jerk, and fluttered down. The other climbed quickly and circled and headed back to the carrier.

Almost immediately the naval engagement opened. British gunboats maneuvered for position. Broadsides were deafening and British shells began pouring into the harbor of Dakar. We could see the explosions aboard the *Richelieu*, severely damaged in that attack. Three submarines came out between

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the jetties, a suicide move, inviting destruction. Two of them were sunk. Standing on deck we could see their bows settle, sterns rising in air as they dove beneath the water. The Commander of the third apparently thought better of it and put back behind the jetties.

What we could see of it was spectacular, but we were not to be permitted to see much of it. The strategy had already been planned. The motors throbbed in our transport, and troopships moved swiftly southward as part of the fleet was detached to continue as convoy while the remainder continued the demolition of the ships in the harbor and the harbor installations. The booming reverberation of the battle followed us for miles down the coast.

We came to anchor off the little town of Rufisquie, about twenty-five miles away, and rode there, waiting. Officers and men were now on the alert. Packs and rifles were ready and we were standing by to disembark at a minute's notice. The day wore on and nothing happened. Mess was served as usual, but we were silent, anticipating that at any moment we would be in action. Night fell. The moon was big and silvery, and we were still riding at anchor, waiting for orders. A British cruiser plowed toward us and slowed to a stop,

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silhouetted against the blue horizon. An Admiral and several high-ranking officers left it and chugged in a launch to our transport. They were piped overside and went immediately to General de Gaulle's cabin. Standing around the deck that night, we knew that the fate of many of us was being decided. They departed at about nine o'clock and we turned in as usual.

At daybreak the next morning, Assembly sounded. The order was given. We slung our packs upon our backs, climbed into the strap harness, filed to boat stations. The boats were dropped in their davits and we took our positions in them, riding by the hull of our own ship awaiting the word to pull away for shore. We were so close that it would have been only a matter of minutes before we were scrambling up the beach and into the town, but the order was not given. At sunrise we were still waiting for the command. Two hours later, we were still waiting. At noon, when the sun was hot and blistering, we were still waiting. Men were becoming impatient and tugged at their pack straps, itching to get going. Each officer had his orders and his specific objective. Mine was to proceed directly to the hospital at Dakar, where there was a medical corps of about thirty.

There were about 5000 men aboard the trans-

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ports, and all that day they talked about Dakar, looked forward to taking it, anticipated it, and were confident that we could do it. They were spoiling for action, bitter at the treatment given the four officers who had tried to go ashore. The plan was clear. We would land, make a forced march and surprise the garrison at Dakar. There must have been German officers or Vichy French traitors there. French soldiers would not seriously oppose us; but if they did we would fight.

The sun sank, twilight gathered and deepened into darkness, and now we were certain the command would come. We would make a forced march by night and arrive at Dakar at dawn. And then, to our dismay, the orders were changed. We were told to get back aboard the transport and return to our quarters. We were bewildered and could not understand it. Soldiers climbed to the decks, mumbling and grumbling, silenced here and there by the cracking commands of officers; but when they got back below decks, their consternation broke out loudly. They felt disappointed and cheated.

A meal was served at about eleven o'clock that night. Again the motors of the transport were throbbing and we were moving south. Again the convoy surrounded us. Fact and rumor spread

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about the ship. We were told that three French battle cruisers had sailed from Southern France through Gibraltar, and had reached Dakar about twelve hours before we arrived. The fault, it appeared, rested with the British for permitting them to go through the strait.

Failure to move upon Dakar had an immediate and bad effect upon the morale of the men. Many of them had been in the French Foreign Legion for years. Relatively few of them had been in the service less than seven years. They were inordinately proud of the service and jealous of its reputation. The Legion had never in history retreated. They wanted to go back; to take Dakar at any cost and redeem the good name of the Legion; but they could do no more than grouse and grumble, a characteristic of all good armies. The transports and convoy continued south toward Freetown. The bitterness of the men persisted, and there were rumblings of complaint among them below decks: that politicians and not fighting men were running the war; that statesmen had prevailed upon de Gaulle to withdraw. Two days later, when we reached Freetown, shore leave was granted to men and officers. It was the first time we had been off the ship in a month.

* * *

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In Freetown, we got our first news of what was happening in other parts of the world. I learned that the Selective Service Act had been signed by President Roosevelt, and it posed a complex problem for me. Although I was an officer in the Free French Foreign Legion, I was still an American citizen. I had been careful to protect my citizenship in a corollary agreement that was part of my acceptance of a commission. This provided that in keeping with the United States policy of neutrality I would not engage in combat service, and would serve in the ambulance unit of the medical corps; that if the United States entered the war, I would be accorded the right to transfer from the Free French Forces to the United States Army, or to any volunteer group of United States citizens; or to transfer to any combat unit of the Free French Foreign Forces upon my own request; and that such transfer to combat service in the Free French Forces would not affect my right to transfer to the United States Army if America entered the war. I had not renounced or relinquished my citizenship, and my rights were fully protected.

Registration day had been announced, and I called at the office of the acting American consul to find out what my status was. He didn't know. I wrote home to have my father take up the question

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of registration with the proper authorities. I could not very well get back to Bridgewater to attend to the formality myself, and I did not want to be classed as a deserter.

It was depressing in Freetown and, at the end of the rainy season, as hot as Texas in midsummer during the day, and it rained during the night. Because of the war, Freetown was fast becoming the Hong Kong of the West African coast. The English could no longer use Dakar, and Freetown had become the chief port. There was a white colony of about 200 there, and so many blacks that it was impossible to estimate their number. The population of the city is about 56,000. A big army garrison was stationed in the hills. I met the head of the American West African Line in the Grand Hotel, and got some American cigarettes from him, the first request of every American soldier when he meets an American citizen anywhere in a foreign land.

It was pleasant to be on land again and, in spite of the heat and rain, the town was picturesque, with Sugar Loaf mountain in the background, sturdy courts of justice and public buildings, an Anglican cathedral and beautiful botanical gardens. Strategically, it is an open door to West Africa, and has a deep, wide harbor, capable of accommo-

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dating an entire fleet at the terminus of the Sierra Leone railway. Although the white colony is small, a majority of the population of Syrians and Creoles speak English, and it was easy to get along there.

I stayed ashore three days; on the night that I returned to the ship, all officers were summoned to General de Gaulle's cabin. Here, for the first time, the General gave us a rough outline of the campaign he had decided upon. He gave no reasons or explanations, nor did he encourage questions from his staff. He was a commander issuing orders.

"Our first mission," he said, "is to visit some of the colonies which have rallied to our cause. The first of these is the Cameroons. We will go there. I will establish headquarters and make preparations; and later, we will get at the Italians on the East Coast by invading Abyssinia and Eritrea. We have a score to settle with the Italians for plunging a dagger into the back of France."

The conference was merely informative, to satisfy, in part, our curiosity and the curiosity of the men. After being given this brief outline, we were dismissed and returned to our commands.

We weighed anchor that night, continued under convoy, and three days later, on October 3, arrived at Victoria. Here we left the Dutch transports for small boats, to go up a river to Douala in the

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Cameroons. It was a slow process. There were not enough small boats, and each made several trips ferrying the men to our new and temporary headquarters. On the way up the river, we saw the masts and stacks of German ships that had been sunk there during the first World War. This had once been a German colony. For the first time since leaving France, some of the Legionnaires saw a French flag flying over French territory, a spectacle that moved all of them, and brought tears to the eyes of some. We went about ten miles up the river to a small landing in a town with a white population of 300, more or less. The town had done a large business in the export of peanuts, cocoa beans and bananas, and there was a large warehouse near the shore, where these were normally stored. The warehouse was cleaned out to make a barracks for soldiers, while officers looked about for suitable quarters for themselves. Infantry and combat units moved up immediately to the town of Yaunde, about seven hours away on a slow-moving type of railroad train.

That night there was a celebration in our honor. In the meantime, officers had been quartered in the homes of whites. We were in friendly French territory, a pleasant village of open-air cafés, where bartenders knew how to mix a highball or cocktail,

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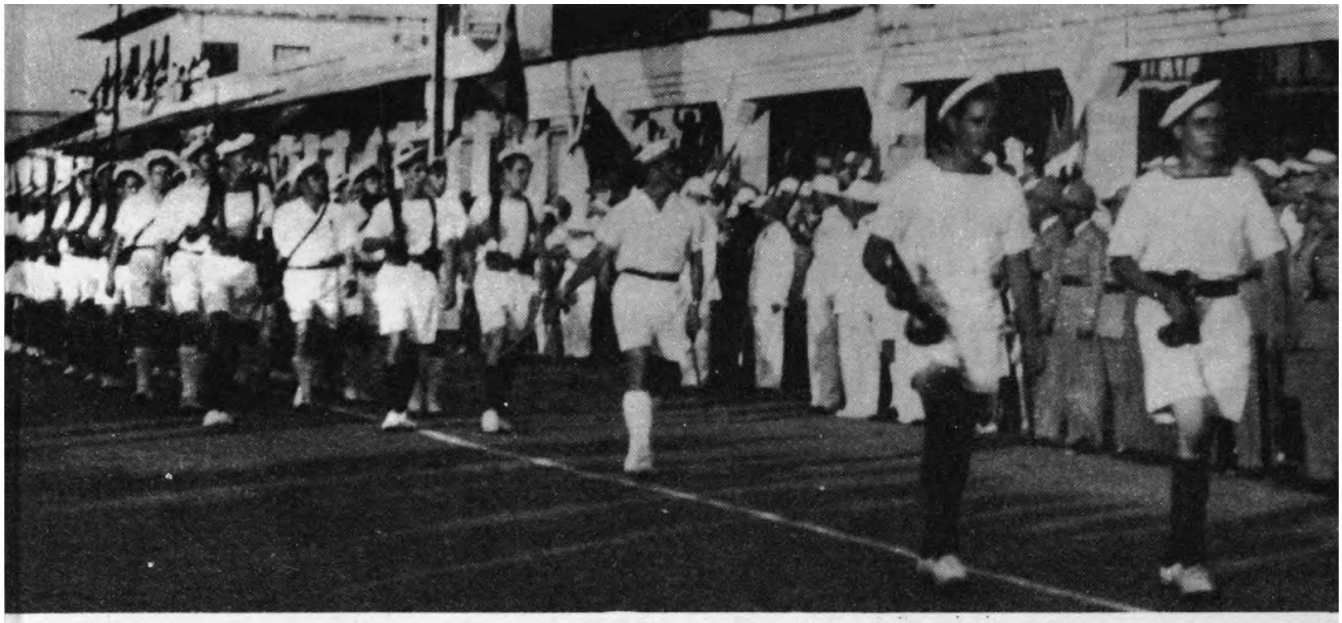
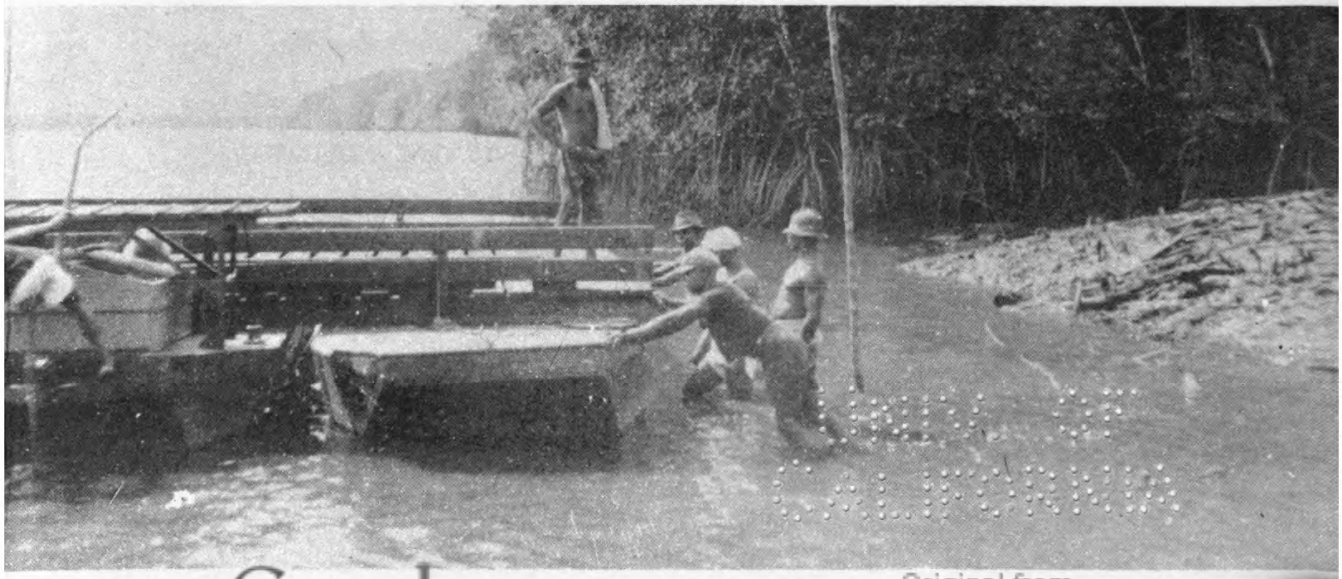


FREE FRENCH NAVY ON PARADE IN DOUALA

LANDING



SHALLOW DRAFT FERRY IN THE CAMEROONS

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and there was plenty of liquor on hand. There were minstrels and singers and music, and everybody was very happy about it. Governor General LeClerc came to greet us, and there were speeches and greetings and acknowledgments. The next day, General de Gaulle arrived and there was another celebration and more speeches and greetings and acknowledgments. The people of Douala were strong on ceremonials. When Captain D'Argenlieu, who had been wounded at Dakar, arrived on a stretcher, there was another ceremony for him. He was taken to a temporary hospital, and we went about the business of improving the place as a camp for soldiers. We changed into summer clothing and replaced long woolen trousers with shorts, packed away tunics and temperate climate underwear. We were now in a land of heat and mosquitoes, and there was strong prospect that we would remain there for some time. More barracks for soldiers were built of bamboo, and all openings were protected by mosquito netting. The heat throughout the day was intense, at times almost suffocating, and part of our job was to lay a foundation and set up an adequate and more satisfactory hospital. We took over houses for the officers. I shared one of these with Captain Delavinne and Captain Dumond: a small stucco structure with three rooms and

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cement floors, dining room, kitchen, bedroom and a waterless shower. The shower was operated by standing in it and having a batman pour buckets of water through the roofless top. We had a cook for the officers, and lived fairly comfortably there. We had a fairly impressive garrison. In addition to the Free French that had just arrived, troops of the Colonial Army, the French equivalent of the American Marines, already there, were now absorbed into our command, and recruits were trekking toward us from all directions.

General de Gaulle had established his headquarters at Brazzaville, about a half-hour away by plane and two days away by boat, although he traveled almost exclusively by plane. This was to be our home for the next three months, and when our hospital, barracks, supplies and equipment were in order, there was not much for us to do — a bad situation for any army, because men, for their own good, must be kept busy. For our training we hunted elephants in the jungles, but had little luck because we did not have the right type of elephant rifle. However, it kept officers and men occupied. After a month or more, it became a problem to fight off boredom. There were Europeans in the white colony, but no Americans. All of them were kind and understanding, and there were successive

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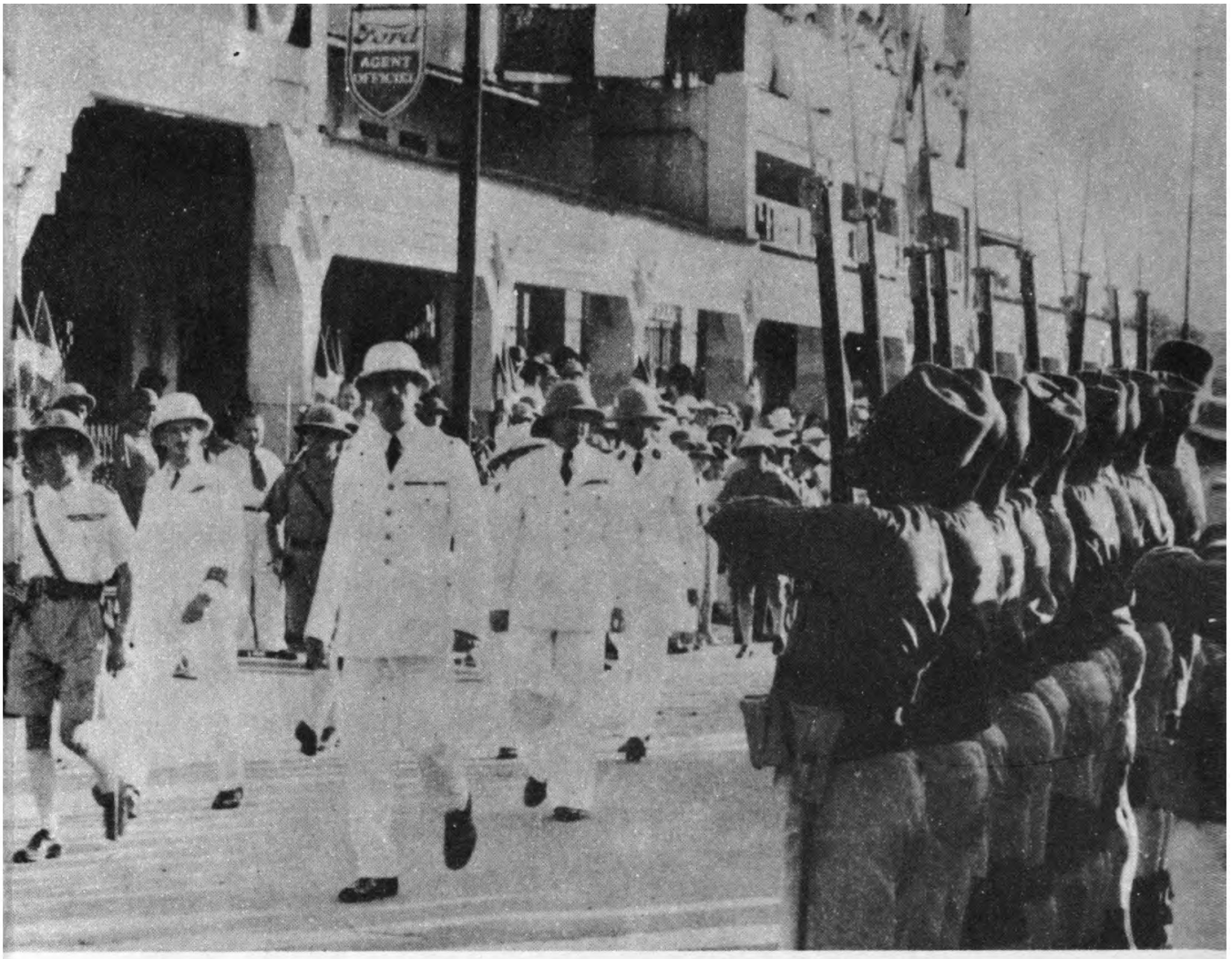
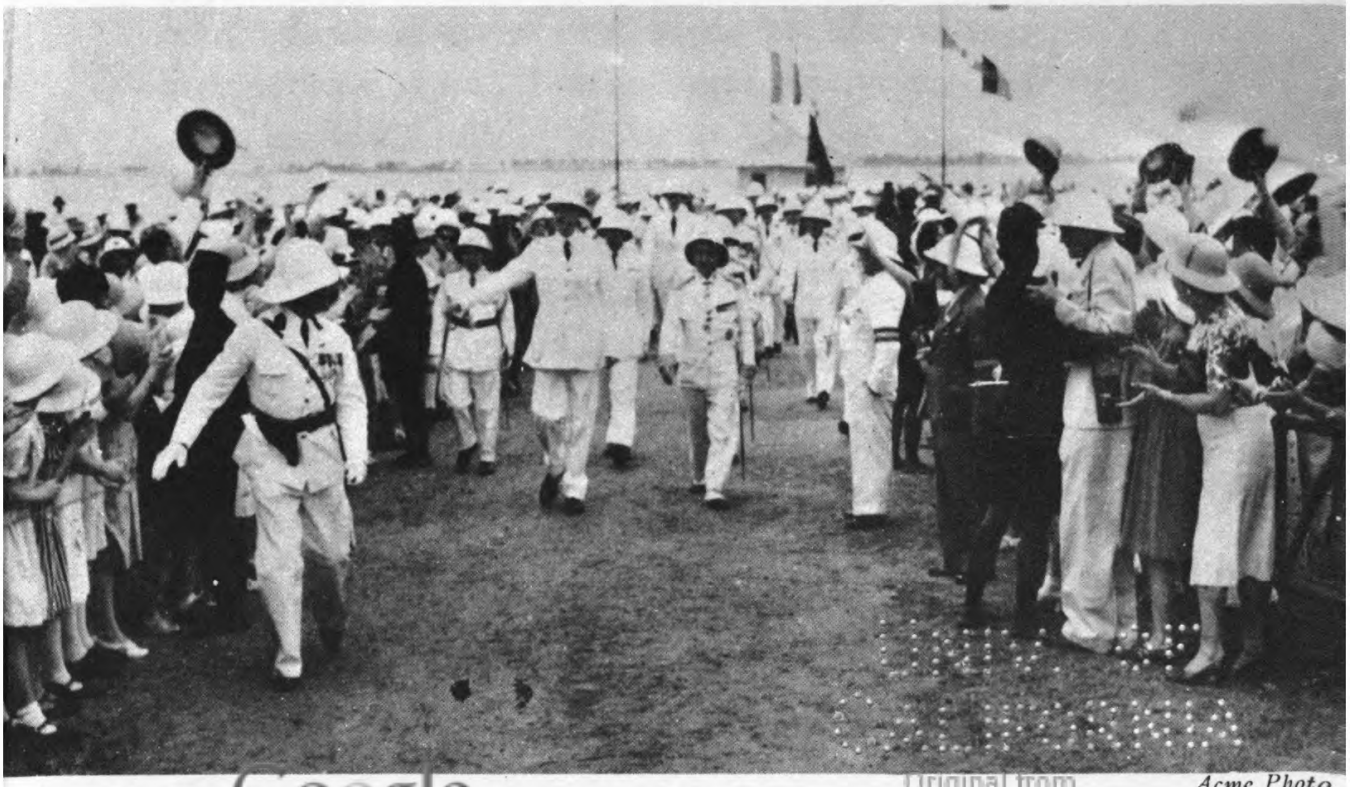


REVIEW OF THE BLACK TROOPS AT DOUALA



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GENERAL DE GAULLE GREETED IN THE BELGIAN CONGO

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cocktail parties for weeks. It was an unhealthy place, where malaria and yellow fever were common, and there was a jar of quinine pills on every table, so that men could dose themselves during the day, as a preventative.

When we tired of elephant hunting, we borrowed native canoes and paddled up the marshy rivers shooting crocodiles; but that, we found, can be fun for just about so long. After that, we went sightseeing among the rubber plantations of the northern Cameroons. Finally, I got permission to go on to Yaunde, and, in spite of the fact that I was in a noncombatant medical corps, to take training with the infantry. I was driven to it by a complete absence of anything else to do. After that, I was too tired to be bored. When I returned to medical duty, the only cases needing attention were victims of malaria, and in the end I picked up that, too, received an injection and went to bed with a temperature of 103. Late in November, a detachment of Black troops was sent to clean up the Province of Gabon, a small place between our garrison and General de Gaulle's headquarters, held by Vichy French in French Equatorial Africa. After a few days of jungle fighting, the detachment returned with about 150 prisoners. Within a few weeks most of the prisoners arrived at the conclu-

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sion that they had been fighting on the wrong side, and joined the Free French Forces. Curiously enough, no one tried to convince them. They argued it out among themselves and joined up voluntarily.

Christmas Day was like any Monday in August in the Cameroons, and among the Legionnaires the day was not set apart or celebrated. It brought, though, the best Christmas present we could have received — orders to move.

We did not know where we were going and did not care. We were delighted to get out of Douala, and were ferried down the stream again in small boats to the mouth of the river. At last, we were on our way to action. At the mouth of the river, we climbed aboard larger boats, and sailed up the coast toward Freetown, where our transports were anchored. It was a curious Christmas night for me. I stood at the railing, looking into a moonlit sky crowded with stars. It was warm and we were still wearing uniform shorts. I felt homesick and thought of New England, of plowed roads and woods deep in snow, icicles on the eaves, a blazing fireplace, a tree, holly, tinsel, baubles and gifts, frosted windowpanes, steaming automobile radiators, and the chiming of church bells. To me it was Christmas. To my companions in the Foreign Le-

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gion it was just another day, a happy day because at last they were going to fight the Italians.

I envied their indifference, and wondered how it must feel to be like them. For days I had been turning over in my mind the thought of transferring from the medical transport corps to the infantry, under the option as provided in my agreement. They were fighters, in the thick of action, while, in my corps, I would come along after it was over. I decided to request a transfer.

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Chapter Thirteen

WE left Freetown the following day, bound south. I had submitted a request for a transfer to the infantry, and there was an impressive ceremony and procedure about joining it. The request had been approved, and as I was already an officer and would be transferred as an officer, I was interviewed by Colonel Amilakvari, in command, in his quarters aboard the ship, and questioned at some length about my reasons for asking to be transferred. He appeared to be satisfied, although he did not commit himself, and I returned to my quarters to wait.

In the meantime, all of the officers of his command were assembled in his quarters, and in accordance with the custom of the Foreign Legion, my qualifications were presented to them, and they were given the opportunity to accept or reject me by secret ballot. The vote must be unanimous. A

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single dissenting vote is enough to defeat an applicant. They cast their ballots. There was no dissenting vote. I was summoned to the officers' quarters and presented to them as an officer in the Free French Foreign Legion infantry, and was assigned to the second company of the first battalion. I was pleased, both because of the confidence the Colonel and officers had shown in me, and because it placed me in a combat battalion, where I, like the men I had come to know and to admire, would see action.

Until now, my batman had been a French soldier, about thirty years old, who had selected the medical corps and accepted an assignment as batman because it spared him from grueling training in the field. A new batman was assigned to me, Blashiek, a native of Poland. He was a tough soldier, husky, about five feet ten inches tall, and he had been in the Foreign Legion for about seven years. Captain Morel of the second company recommended him to me. I made formal request for him and he was assigned.

My duties changed immediately. Infantry officers and men continued training aboard ship. Our transport was a fairly large liner, and had formerly been in the fleet of the British-India Line. Each day the officers gathered in the main lounge for lectures and

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instruction, tactical problems and explanations. The Colonel, Major and medical officers spoke to us, and throughout the day we gave the men setting-up exercises and monkey drills on deck, and augmented these with boxing and wrestling matches, and races — anything to keep the men occupied. Twice each day, every officer had a few hours of special duty — inspection of quarters, including officers' quarters, for cleanliness; inspection of food to see that it was right for the men.

A strict military routine was maintained: Assembly of troops on deck at five every morning, assignment of fatigue and punishment details. Each platoon officer saw to it that men reported on sick list before going to the doctor, and read reports of infractions of rules at Assembly.

At night, the officers usually did a little gambling, playing baccarat, but it was a strange form of gambling, because when an officer was out of money, he borrowed from the handiest person to him. There was an unwritten law that an officer who was asked for a loan must make it; and another that the loan never would be paid back. Under these circumstances, money was always evenly distributed, and each officer seemed to have enough.

Monotony was broken first when one of the enlisted men died of malaria as we were sailing around

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Southwest Africa toward Capetown. All ships of the fleet were notified, and flags were placed at half mast. Officers and men, sailors and soldiers, assembled on the deck as the afternoon sun was setting. The covered body, on a bier, was placed before them. The colors of France were draped over it, and in utter silence, except for the occasional shrieking of birds, the Chaplain read the committal service. When he had concluded, Colonel Amilakvari stepped forward, faced them, and delivered a short eulogy of the soldier, and as his ringing voice died away, there was a full minute of complete silence. Smoke drifted lazily from the stacks of the ships in the fleet. On the decks of companion ships, soldiers and sailors were standing at attention, facing us. The Colonel's commands broke the stillness.

"Present arms!" Hands clapped loudly on rifles as they came up in unison. A bugle and drum corps sounded the call of the Legion, and as the strains faded away into the sea, the colors were removed from the bier. It was pushed to the railing, tilted; the body slid off and we could hear the splash.

"Order arms!" Rifle stocks dropped heavily to the deck.

"Dismissed!" Officers and men returned to their tasks.

There was a mass ceremony when the troopships

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crossed the Equator, and many of the Legionnaires became sons of Neptune. It was impossible to throw all of them overboard in keeping with the age-old custom, but the moment we crossed, a holiday was declared. Restrictions were lifted for several hours. The men brought out musical instruments, sang and danced, and the Colonel ordered an extra ration of wine for everybody.

We arrived at Durban, South Africa, on January 26, tired of the ship after a long voyage. Officers and men were granted shore leave. It was cold now, and we changed to winter uniforms. Durban was a large, modern town, with a white population of about 80,000 out of a total population of 146,000, the largest city in Natal. A holiday resort, it had beach and country clubs, racial and private clubs, and the officers of the Legion were made honorary members for a few days in all of them. The city was full of soldiers — Aussies, New Zealanders and British, but the Aussies, with their characteristic devil-may-care attitude, had practically taken over the city. My introduction to the place was a burly, husky Aussie between the shafts of a rickshaw, a native feathered headdress waving in the wind, and a black native with an Aussie's campaign hat on, sitting in the rickshaw, as the

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Aussie galloped down West Street, the city's main drive. It was an officers' town. There were dances in our honor and an unlimited supply of pretty hostesses to show us around.

The Legionnaires and the Aussies went together like ham and eggs. Each fighting organization apparently admired the reputation for recklessness of the other, and they co-operated and co-ordinated as naturally as though they had served side by side for years. The Foreign Legion was not in town an hour before Legionnaires were wearing brown hats with brims turned up, and the Aussies were wearing Legionnaire kepis, walking from bar to bar with arms linked. The native and white populations obviously had their troubles with the Aussies, when they were in the city alone, but when the Legion joined them, headaches multiplied by the hour.

"Waltzing Matilda" could be heard all over the city, blasting from phonographs and music machines, and echoing in hotel lobbies and dining rooms. A favorite Aussie stunt was to walk into a bar, clear off all the glassware in sight in one sweeping crash, order a drink, smile at the bartender, and inquire genially: "How much do I owe you for everything?" The bartender set his price. The Aussie peeled off bills from a roll and went out happy; and so, for that matter, was the bartender.

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He hadn't made so much money, so quickly, in years.

For three hectic days, Durban was a magnificent, outdoor madhouse, until Foreign Legionnaires, in various degrees of disrepair, reported back to their ships — on time.

Back aboard the transport, once again we were struggling with boredom. In spite of boxing, drills, confined and restricted athletics, lectures on tactics and blackboard work, days were monotonous. Water was scarce and rationed. The sun was blistering, and there was little relief from suffocating heat aboard ship. Conversational depths among officers had now been fully plumbed, and there was little to talk about but the war. We followed the communiqués every day, discussed them, until we had exhausted every shred of information in them, particularly their effect upon our coming campaign, and we were interminably speculating on that. Officers and men were weary of the sight of each other. Among the officers' cabins, where four were quartered in each, I lay in a lower berth facing Lieutenant Veneraq every night before falling off to sleep, and every morning when I got up. I knew every line in the contour of his face and throat, even to the scar behind his left ear; his per-

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sonal habits, and precisely how and when he would move his arm.

A week out of Durban, a British submarine joined us. During the late afternoon, we sat on deck watching planes from the carrier in our escort dropping smoke bombs, practising on improvised targets. Each day was hotter than the day before, and we were now coming into dangerous waters, off Somaliland in the Indian Ocean. An airplane watch was established. Fourteen machine guns, always manned in preparation for an airplane attack, were mounted on the deck, and officers were stationed at lookouts, ready to give the command to fire. For a time, danger provided relief from boredom.

We plowed through the Straits of Aden and into the Red Sea. Day after day passed, and although we were always on the alert, nothing happened; and on February 14, we arrived at Port Sudan.

There was no shore leave. We were now setting out on the war mission that brought us here, and we filed aboard waiting trains for a three-hour ride through the hot, sandy desert, to the ghost town of Saukin. Once famous as a way-station to Mecca, with a history that goes back to the Romans, Saukin was dead and had been interred since 1912, when

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the last inhabitant died, or fled, when Port Sudan took it over. We set up tents and made camp and got our first taste of sand.

Sand, we were to find, was our first and natural enemy. We would never be able to conquer it, nor would we ever be able to escape it. Our first taste of it was a minor irritation, an inconvenience that we had heard a lot about and always felt that we could shrug off; we had thought that we would ultimately become accustomed to it. I had anticipated it in much the same way as I had once viewed the prospect of cold and snow in Finland, as nature in the guise of a true misanthrope, hating all mankind. There was always the reassuring conviction in our minds that others had put up with it and survived, and we could, too; but we felt differently about it when we were covered with it.

Ten minutes after the trains disgorged 5000 men on the desert, the air was clouded with sand. Tents of streets were obliterated by it. Our eyes were red and watering as we pulled lids down to dislodge small irritating grains of it, and we were coughing and choking. Near by was the Red Sea, and at the first respite, we dived into it, anticipating cool refreshment, and discovered to our chagrin that the water was enervating and never invigorating. For weeks, water had been a problem for

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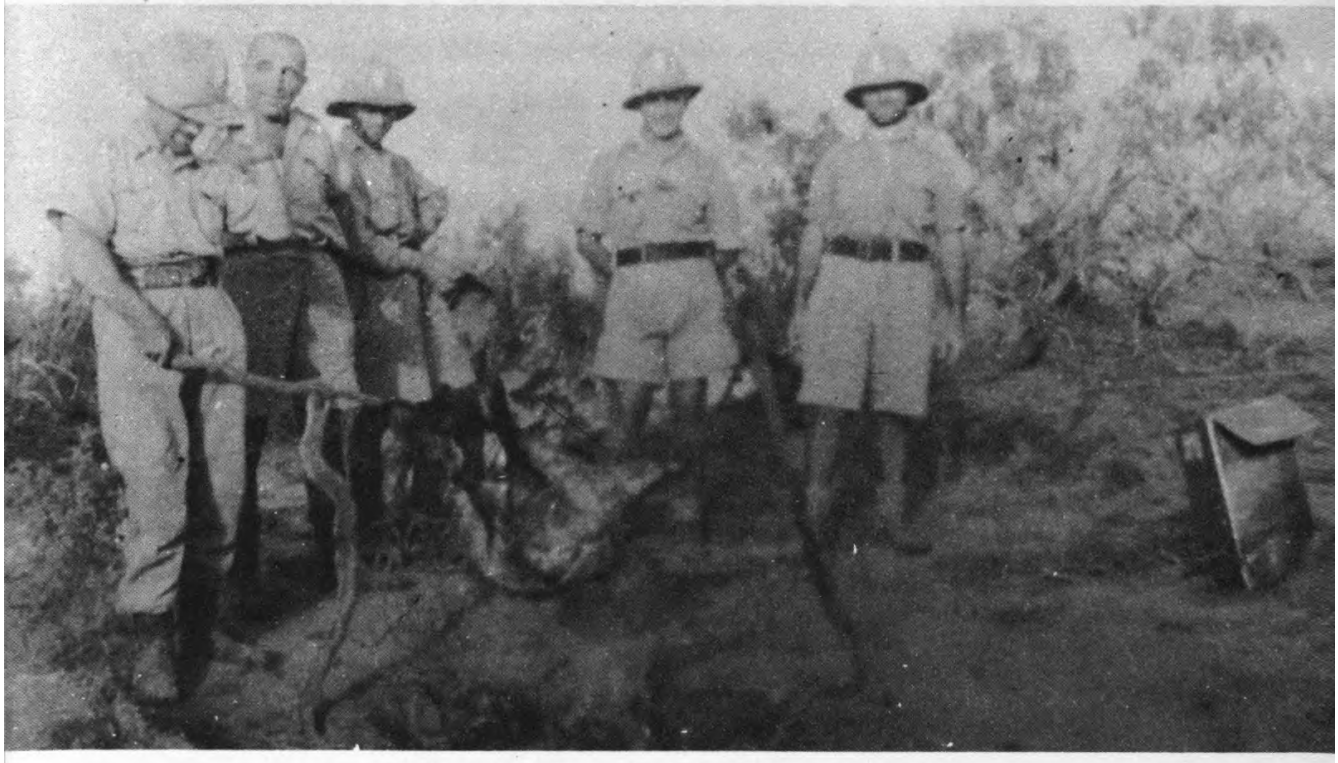
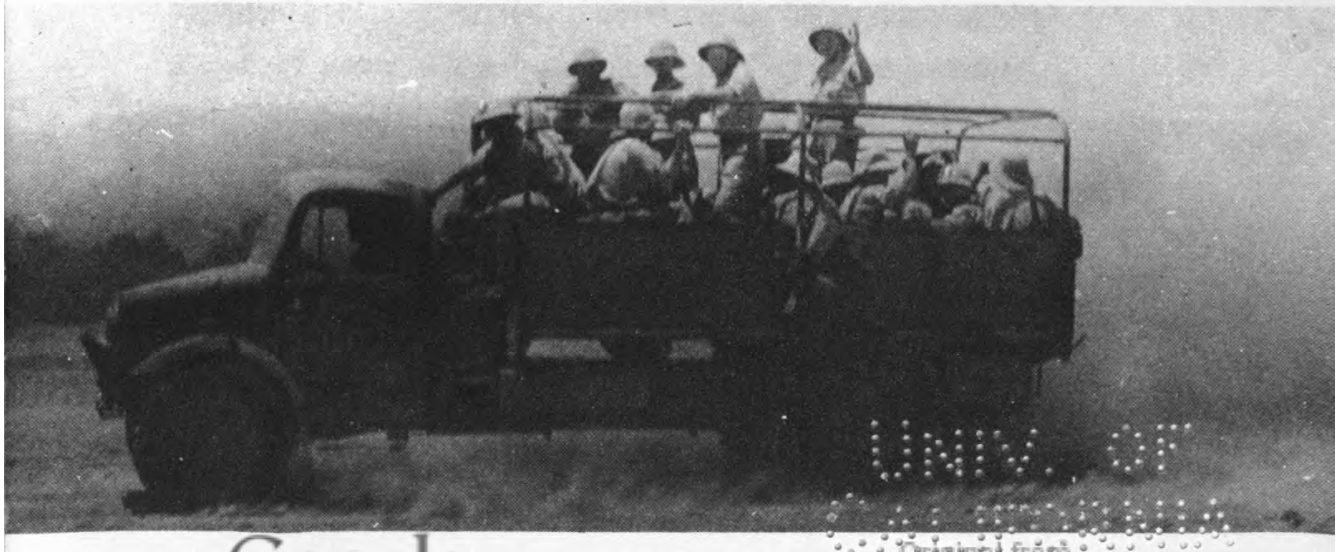
SETTING-UP EXERCISES IN THE SUDAN



ERITREA: ROASTING GOATS



THE LEGION ENTERS THE ERITREAN DESERT

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us. It had been doled out and rationed in small quantities aboard ship, and we had looked forward to a time when we could drink our fill of clear, cold, crystal water, bury our faces in it, fill tubs with it and wallow in it. Now fresh water was even more scarce, and it was rationed, almost in trickles. But we were resourceful, or so we thought. Several officers clubbed together and sent a soldier to Port Sudan for beer. He came back some time later with a case, and we smacked our lips in anticipation of a cool, thirst-slaking draught. We tried it, and spat the first mouthful on the sand. It was warm, and flat and unpalatable.

Civilization followed us. After my tent was up, and as I was putting things in order in it, I received a cable from home, and a letter from M. Bellenger in London. The cable had been dispatched a few hours earlier. The letter had been on the way for three months.

There was only one way to train for desert warfare; and that was the hard way. We were soft and flabby after months aboard ship, and training began immediately. The task now was to toughen up quickly against sand and sun. Patrols were assigned, and that night each man dug the hole in which he slept. The next day we went out on desert maneuvers. Cork helmets replaced the berets we wore

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aboard ship and in temperate climes. Officers and men shouldered their sixty-pound packs and set out across the desert to simulate the conditions we knew we would meet in Eritrea and Egypt. Our diet changed. We had canned food every day now, and varied this by buying goats from the natives, cooking and eating them. Camels were plentiful, and we killed them for food, and to condition the men, we went on forced marches of fifteen to twenty miles a day in the searing sun.

Sand and heat nagged and plagued us. The air was hot and dry and the sun was merciless. It burned and scorched necks and the exposed skin between the bottoms of shorts and the tops of socks. It glared on desert sand — on the rocky shale, bare of vegetation — on hills. It baked rocks to such a degree that it was impossible to sit upon them. There was no shade. At rest periods, we pushed crates into position, or erected sun shelters and flopped in the narrow shadow they afforded. Cheap, dime-store sunglasses were highly prized pieces of equipment. Cigarettes were impossible to get, and I smoked bad tobacco in a pipe.

Maneuvers continued while we waited for our equipment to come up. Trucks and automobiles had been dispatched months earlier, while we were in the Cameroons, and if they were on schedule,

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able to follow their time-table without serious delay, they should come overland across the desert and arrive at Saukin at about the same time that smaller trucks and automobiles were hauled out of the holds of transports and placed upon the docks. We had no tanks.

Sand now replaced the monotony of sea and water; sand everywhere, in hair, in shoes, gritting between teeth; sand in clothing, in food, in rationed water; sand in pockets and under collars, in rifles, guns and equipment, rough, stinging sand, whipping across the desert in fine particles that stung the skin and drove men, unaccustomed to it, almost frantic; sand in blinding sun and in heat almost unbearable.

This was my first appearance as an officer before the men of my platoon, and my first serious experience in commanding and directing men. Their eyes, I knew, were always upon me, taking my measure, deciding whether I was competent, capable and dependable, and yet the gap that existed between officer and enlisted men could not be closed no matter how much I might want their companionship and encouragement. Weisskopf, my Sergeant Major, was built like an ox, and almost old enough to be my father. Big, broad-shouldered

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and powerful, he was also nerveless. He had been bronzed by many campaigns in the Legion in Africa and had then served about fourteen years, and at first the voice in which I bellowed commands to him belied the awe in which I held him and the respect I had for him, and as he accepted them and executed them, I could see that he was studying me.

The others varied in age from nineteen to forty. They seemed to understand each other, and got along well together, and they broke into cliques and gathered in circles on the sand at various halts, stretching out, apparently unmindful of the sun and sand. They were comrades, who talked familiarly of many things, and I had to remain aloof from them. My Corporal was a curious standout, whom I should have liked to know better. His name was Perez, and from snatches of conversation I had overheard at desert huddles during rest periods, I gathered that he had studied for the priesthood in Spain. He had fought for Franco, but after the attack upon Barcelona and the shelling of helpless civilians, he had rebelled. He said he could not stand it, and deserted to join the Republicans and fight against Franco, a decision, I thought, that he never regretted. Later he escaped and joined the Foreign Legion.

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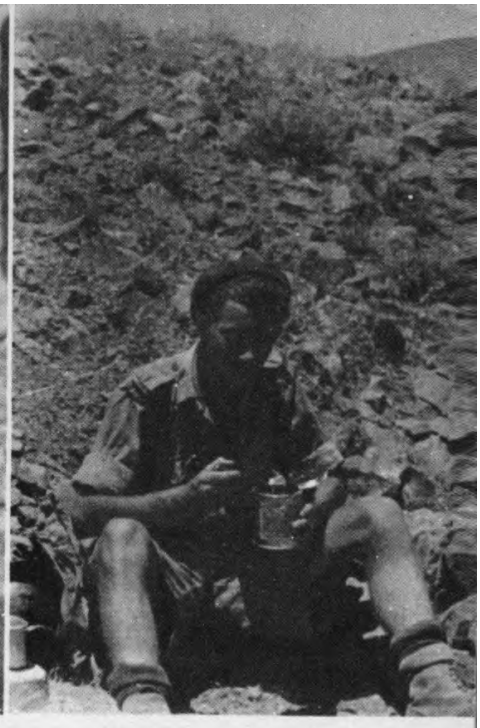
THE LIEUTENANT SLEEPS IN HOMEMADE SHADE



HIS ONE MEAL A DAY

SOLDIERS OF HASEY'S PLATOON

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They bore up under this training easily and toughened quickly. Day after day, we marched across the desert, deployed, dug in, simulated firing and rapid fire upon an imaginary enemy. This man-killing grind continued for eleven days until our equipment came up, when we were called in from maneuvers. We were ready now for action.

On February 25, we left in small Indian boats for a two-day trip down the coast, and our first foray into Italian territory. We left the boats at Masa Taclai, a small desert port already in our hands, where the first Italians I met were prisoners.

Masa Taclai was a Free French advanced position and a clearing depot for prisoners and wounded. Scottish and Indian troops, stationed near by since the outbreak of the war, had been fighting south of this town, and our contingent of Free French was to co-ordinate and co-operate with these and other troops according to a plan known to de Gaulle. The Scots, who had heard that we had arrived, were in training in Port Sudan, and had already been asking our advance patrols impatiently: "When are you coming up so that we can get this campaign over?"

I looked at the first Italian prisoners straggling through Masa Taclai, and at the first opportunity

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stopped to talk to a few of them. I was surprised at their bitterness, not toward us, the Scots, or the Indians — but that of a vicious hatred of Mussolini and the generation they charged with responsibility for the war.

They, too, were victims of sand incessantly fighting to escape it. They had been through it for months. We were just beginning.

"Whenever you see an Italian over forty years old, shoot him dead. Don't take him prisoner," one of the prisoners told me in a voice that dripped hatred.

"Why?" I asked.

"Because they're responsible for all this," he said. "It's their war, not ours. They put Mussolini in power. We didn't. We didn't want this war. We didn't want to fight you; but we were stuck with it. We couldn't get out of it. We were forced into the army."

We put the prisoners to work and let them relieve their feelings, taking it out of Mussolini in hard labor.

A number of prisoners were Blacks, and wore the French Army uniforms of the Vichy forces, which was the same uniform as the Free French; this led to some confusion. The first night in Masa Taclai, a guard over a group of Vichy French Black

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prisoners found one missing, picked up a Free French Black and threw him into the prison camp to make the count right. He stayed there until I discovered at roll call that one of my men was missing, and plucked him out of the prison camp just in time.

Our trucks came up; the next day we climbed aboard with them and moved in a motor cavalcade over the road southeast of Masa Taclai into the mountains — cleared of Italians, only the week before, by British troops. Since neither officers nor men of our own forces were familiar with the general strategy behind our moves, I inquired of English officers, wherever I met them on the road, for information, and was told by several of them that the immediate mission of the Free French Foreign Legion was to take Cheren. A wounded English soldier told me: —

"Cheren is the last Italian stronghold before Addis Ababa. We're waiting for the Foreign Legion to take it. We've cleared the rest of the way."

The trucks came to a halt in the little town of Cub Cub, where we got off, ready to go into action. This was as far as the trucks could take us. It was our jumping-off place, and we were told that we would march that night. Free French artillery, which had come overland from Saukin, had been

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moved into position in hills of the mountainous terrain to command the valleys through which we must pass. In the plan of campaign, obvious obstacles had been foreseen, and the supply line was functioning. When we left the trucks, a camel caravan was waiting to carry equipment to a point southwest of Cub Cub, designated on our maps, for lack of other landmarks, as "Point A"; and here, in a rocky, mountainous, treeless pass of loose, slatelike terrain and a low, scrub growth, we established our base of supplies. Henceforth, time and distances were to become confusing. Before we were through, few of us could tell what day of the week it was. We were too exhausted to remember.

We stayed at Point A resting until nightfall; although from my point of view the rest was purely technical.

I was in command of a platoon of forty men in a mountain pass in what seemed to me to be an obscure, forgotten, unknown corner of the world, a place neglected even by God. I had a compass, a toothbrush, the clothing that covered me, an overcoat, a little food, and two small bottles of water. The boy from Bridgewater was now a French-speaking officer in the Foreign Legion under the scrutiny of forty pairs of eyes of seasoned

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soldiers, hardened by years, tough, indifferent to death, curious about my stamina and how I would behave under fire. If I winced or hesitated before them, I was not only lost, but disgraced. They could not tolerate either fear or indecision.

"This," I thought, "is what I came here for."

Ahead of me was the First Company; behind me the Third Company, in the rear a machine-gun company, on the hills around me, artillery. Far ahead in the distance was a place known vaguely to us as Point B, the next stopping place beyond Point A, and a good deal of energy and sweat would be expended before we arrived there. Around me, units of the Free French Army emerged from nowhere — coming by sea, by train and by highway — faces and commands that I had not seen since I left Douala, where I hunted elephants.

When night had blacked out the mountains, there came the low command to march. Trails and direction were not my concern. I led my men, and in turn, I followed the leader, and the leader was the Captain. We slung full packs over our backs, fell into formation, and moved off through mountain scrub — at first scuffling, tripping, and feeling uncertainly with our feet, until our eyes became accustomed to darkness and the appearance of the ground. At midnight we were deployed for safety,

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still pushing through the mountainous scrub, perspiration dripping from noses and chins, clothing wet and chafing, until the first gray streak of dawn, when the command to halt was given, and we dropped in our tracks in the scrub.

We breakfasted out of a tin, and in spite of parched throats, sipped water sparingly. Then we slept through the cool early morning hours until the heat of the sun began to grow stronger and stronger, as though we had been resting in a cool fireless oven until a match was applied to fuel in the stove. The oven heated gradually, until it became first uncomfortable enough to awaken us, and then began to bake us. And we could not escape that oven. We must lie there, and look up at the sun, and take it, waiting impatiently for noon and afternoon. We could not move about and expose ourselves. We could only crawl.

At last the sun descended, and, after a day in hell, night came like a gift from heaven. Again we ate food from a can, drank a little water, thankful to be able to stand erect, to stretch our legs and arms, and yawn. Once again would come the command to march; we moved off under full packs, a repetition of the night before — plodding, plodding, putting one foot before the other, interminably, soaked in sweat that gathered sticky dust, which

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would cake and flake. Another dawn and we dropped again in the scrub, for another day in hell. Our water was almost gone now, and I looked around at my command when the blazing sun deprived us of sleep again, and saw hollow, red eyes and haggard faces; lips swollen and blue from thirst, and knew that I must look the same to them. I never felt such thirst, nor thought my throat and mouth could be so dry; but the campaign plan was functioning, and even thirst had been foreseen. Water came up to us that night. The supply line was working and we were issued two liters per man.

Once again, somewhat refreshed by water and more canned food, we slung our packs over our shoulders and moved forward.

Finally we reached Point B, and here the Second and Third Companies halted.

We were closing in now on Enghiahat, a fortification in the mountains, the first outpost in the approach to Cheren, an approach that in peacetime would not be made through these mountains, but on a good automobile road, forty or fifty miles to our left. We had, all told, about 500 men. There were 1500 men in fortified Enghiahat, and they were crack Alpine Savoie Chasseurs.

The First Company moved forward in an ex-

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ploratory maneuver. The Second and Third Companies were held in reserve. The First Company found itself ambushed and fought all night. My company was ordered to a hill on the right, and the Third Company to a hill on the left, to close in on the forces fighting the First Company and relieve it. My Captain was wounded in the first half-hour. The First Lieutenant was wounded within the hour, and I was left with nothing to guide me but my recollection of lectures on tactics on shipboard. The obvious move was to retreat to our original position at Point B, and re-form. I did so. We reformed, but the Alpine troops had foreseen this, and we fought off two counterattacks to hold this position, using hand grenades in both encounters because the Italians were so close.

Dawn broke. The sun came up, and as the morning wore on sun and heat intensified. Around noon, in the fighting and shifting of positions, we held the hill on the left and the Italians held the hill on the right, and that was our position at five o'clock at night. The battle up to this point was a stalemate.

Our wounded, and the Italian wounded, were spread all over the mountainside. There had been no opportunity to attend to them. Captain Morel had been shot in the hip, and his batman gave him

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First Aid. He was conscious and I reported to him frequently. He was still able to direct the show. "All we can do is to hold our position in such a way as to prevent them from taking us," he said.

"There's no water left," I told him, "and none has come up."

"Send a patrol out for some," he said.

I sent a patrol out, and never saw it again.

When darkness came, Captain Morel ordered me to pick a detail of twenty men and hold the hill, while the rest of the company moved the wounded and our equipment farther down into the valley, where reserves were being held for other missions in the move upon Cheren. Ours was an advance guard, testing the strength of the enemy at Enghiahat. If our company could overcome it, that was so much to the good. If not, it would be overcome by other means. Relief of our company, in the grand strategy, was not contemplated or considered.

Throughout the night the wounded were moved back three or four miles through the valley, to another hill, and before dawn we followed, but reserves seemed to be far, far behind us. We remained all day in frying, sizzling heat, our second full day without water, and in the afternoon, a lookout observed a company of Blacks about three hours' march away. It was impossible to tell whether they

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were friendly or Italian troops. All of us were suffering now from heat and thirst.

"Take three men with you," the Captain ordered, "and see what they are."

We set out on a three-hour march, and long before we officers could make them out, one of the men observed several Arab huts not far away. "Wherever there are Arab huts," he said, "there's water, and those Blacks had to pass the Arabs. We can get water from the Arabs and at the same time find out who they are."

When we came to the Arab huts, our eyes were red, and tongues were swollen with thirst. They gave us dirty, muddy water to drink and nothing could taste sweeter. We pointed to the Blacks, but the Arabs could not speak French, and we could find no way to make them understand us, nor could we understand them. We continued on and found that the Blacks were another three hours' march from the Arab water hole. When we finally caught up with them, we found that they were a company of our own Blacks.

Their Captain gave me a platoon of his troops, and I marched them back three hours to the water hole, where they loaded up every available container with water. Then I marched them three hours more, back to the hill where the company was

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quartered — twelve hours of forced marching for my own detail. The Captain of the Blacks had taken the rest of his company directly to the hill, and when we arrived, the Black troops were making stretchers to move back the wounded. The men on the hill had been sixteen hours without water.

We moved back to rest and replenish our supplies and equipment. We had lost some of our automatic rifles. We made our camp at the Arab water hole, and sent a day patrol out to scout behind the enemy lines and capture a few prisoners, so that we could get as much information as possible about the garrison in the fort. That night more than half of our forces went back to General Headquarters at Point B to recuperate. We sent all of the wounded back except one soldier, who had been shot in the stomach. A surgeon came out to treat him, but he died. The patrol came back with a number of Italian Black troops, and after they were questioned, they were sent back to Point B.

We received replacements and reformed. A runner brought new orders for a second attempt upon the fort. This time, my company went a little to the right of the center of the fort; the Third Company circled the fort to come in upon its rear, and the First Company went to a hill on the left of it, and now we found to our surprise that 7000 prison-

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ers were being driven literally from the Fort into our arms, and the strategy of our own moves became clear to us. An Imperial Scottish force had been driving through in the opposite direction. We had been the diversion and one arm of a pincer. My platoon took between 500 and 600 prisoners and sent them back. We continued driving on to cut the highway traffic and railroad between Asmara, the capital of Eritrea, and Cheren. This was a thirty-mile march, and we were again the advance troops.

I came across a group of Italians, observed an officer with a Leica camera strapped to his belt, removed his gun and the camera and observed, "You won't need this any more." I had the pictures on the roll developed and I photographed much of the rest of the campaign with the camera. The officer was between thirty-five and forty years old, wore a gay feather in his Alpine hat, had on a light khaki tunic, lighter-colored trousers, and high boots. He spoke French fluently, but I was in too much of a hurry to question him. That would be done farther behind the lines. From Point B to the place where we cut the highway, we had marched thirty miles in less than twenty-four hours over these mountains.

We were now far ahead of the main body of our

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troops, and it had been anticipated that a supply line for us would be impossible. We had been given orders to live off the land, but the picking and foraging were scant. We bought food from Arabs, and if they refused to sell it, we took it by force. The chief item of our fare was mule meat. There was not much else in this territory worth eating. Water was no longer a problem. We had plenty of it.

We remained where we had cut the road, because Imperial native troops had gone ahead on our left flank toward Asmara, while our ultimate objective was Cheren on our right flank. We were now tired, exhausted and hungry, and the sun throughout the day was an unmerciful enemy. We rested a while, marched ten miles into Cheren, moved in upon the city with fixed bayonets, and found quickly that ours was but a mopping-up operation. The Imperial Scottish forces in the sweep of their arm of the pincer toward us had already driven Italians out of the city toward us. My platoon alone took 300 prisoners at the approaches to the city.

We rested there, and our trucks rolled up from below Point A. We had our first hot and substantial meal since we had left Point A, and a good sleep. We were told that Asmara had been declared

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an open city, and our orders now were to clamber aboard the trucks and move through the valleys toward Massawa. Rumors break out like rashes in an active army, and one that had us actually excited on the way to Massawa was that "an armistice was to be signed." We rolled up to within eight miles of Massawa that night, and at five o'clock on the morning of April 2, began closing in upon the city.

Massawa, on the African coast of the Red Sea, was the chief port of Italian Eritrea, the heart and prize of the colony, and its capture now would mean that practically all of Eritrea was in our hands. It was on the north end of a bay, built partly on coral, and partly on the islets of Tautlub and Sheik Said. Its public buildings and the houses of its successful Arab and European merchants were built chiefly of coral, and the city was the terminus of the railway, already cut, to Asmara. The engagement, there, was of extreme importance.

In the strategic plan, the Foreign Legion was to make a frontal attack, while Black troops and Colonials closed in on the right flank, and the British, coming in from the north, would cover the right flank of Blacks and Colonials, deploy toward the Red Sea and close in from the rear, directly opposite the Foreign Legion. An advance

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guard was sent out before sunrise on Thursday morning, April 3, and returned with eighteen prisoners, who were probed for information.

This was to be more of a siege than a blitzkrieg, with troops moving forward slowly and on schedule, depending chiefly upon communication and accurate co-ordination with Blacks, Colonials and the British, a closing ring of steel upon a fortified city, with a minor war of nerves on the city and its garrison. They knew they were surrounded. Their outposts were being picked off and captured, and their patrols were not returning to their headquarters.

On the morning of April 4, I took a patrol out myself, my own platoon of forty men, observed an advance guard of a full company of Italians, obviously sent out to protect the approaches to Fort Victor Emmanuel, the first fortification outside the city. I don't think I ever saw such blatant stupidity. The Italians had mined the whole area approaching the fort, and to do so, they had cut paths for themselves so that they might carry mines and explosives, and plant them. They had not mined the paths. They seemed to have held a ridiculous theory that an attacking force would come through the brush, rather than through the paths they had cleared. The advance guard was apparently sitting

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around preoccupied, waiting for us to come through the brush, when we came through their neat paths, surprised them completely, and from almost within the shadow of their fort, I led out one Captain, one Lieutenant, four Sergeants and a hundred Blacks, and marched them over their own mined territory back to our lines.

We had been plucking Italians like daisies all around that fort, but on Saturday morning, April 5, the Italian forces suddenly came awake, and a flight of bombers went over us. The bombardiers dropped their eggs and were surprisingly good marksmen. We dived for cover, and apparently they supposed that we had been wiped out. At any rate, they did not reappear and we continued closing in upon Fort Victor Emmanuel. In the meantime artillery of the Foreign Legion, Colonials, and British was moving into position, and on Palm Sunday, after a conference of officers of the Foreign Legion and the Colonials, the British proposed an armistice, based upon agreement for unconditional surrender before noon. The Italians refused, and at noon a terrific artillery bombardment on both sides began, and the battle for Fort Victor Emmanuel and the city of Massawa was on.

The bombardment was ear-splitting, and worse, to my way of thinking, than any airplane bomb-

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ing we had ever experienced. It continued throughout the day and night, throughout all of Monday and Monday night; and on Tuesday morning at four o'clock, my company received the command to advance upon Fort Victor Emmanuel.

Machine-gun emplacements were on all hills approaching the Fort, and our first mission was to clean them out one by one. My platoon advanced through its assigned sector with bayonets fixed. As machine-gun emplacements identified themselves by fire, they were surrounded and isolated. Legionnaires crept inexorably upon them. My command was falling all around me, but somehow I seemed to be spared. We moved closer and closer to the fort.

My platoon, or what there was left of it, was the first to reach the top of that fort hill, the first to scale its walls and drop inside, and perhaps the first to take the heart out of those Italians. Until then, they had fought well, but now they no longer had stomach for it.

We began disarming the Italians in the fort. My platoon alone had taken more than 300 prisoners. Our company was in control of the fort. We assigned a small detail of men to take care of prisoners, swung the guns of the fort around, and trained them on the city of Massawa. One platoon remained in the fort to man the guns, but by this

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time it was all over but the cheering. Colonials and Blacks were piling into the city, and when surrender came, we counted 11,000 prisoners in Massawa. Little damage had been done to the city proper.

The British had been delayed in their part of the action, chiefly by heavy fortifications in the north. Under the plan, they should have reached the city first, and two hours after the Legion and Colonials had taken it, they did roll in — with tanks, the first we had seen in the campaign.

There were 500 officers among the prisoners, including an Admiral and three Generals, and it was a problem to care for them. An Italian Red Cross ship was in the port, the only one upright and floating. All of the rest of the boats in the harbor, and there were once scores of them, had been sunk or scuttled. She could accommodate 150, more or less, and since there was no other available place for officer prisoners, we put them aboard for a couple of days. Finally we sent them to India.

The entire exploit was the most impressive military maneuver I had ever seen, and perfectly timed. Military operations moved like clockwork. Wherever a man, a platoon or a company was stopped, a friend was standing by to knock the enemy out.

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Chapter Fourteen

TWENTY–FOUR hours later, we were in the town of Massawa, walking its streets, looking in its shop windows, a place as peaceful as any New England town on a Sunday afternoon. Quiet had come to the natives after three days of noise and storm. The battle did not seem to concern them. They did not fawn, or cringe, like a conquered people. They were as indifferent to new soldiers and new uniforms as they would have been toward tourists. Natives and soldiers looked upon each other with mutual curiosity. They did not offend or insult us, and we treated them with normal courtesy.

For officers and soldiers, the let-down was now severe. We had been in violent action for days, anxious and strained, always in danger of being killed, and now a curtain seemed to have dropped upon that temporarily. Anxiety, strain, action and

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sudden death were removed. We were like race horses, halted halfway around a track, led suddenly to quiet, green pastures where we could rest lazily and graze.

I have been asked to bring out battle scenes in more detail, to describe the action and point up the drama, and I have found that battles are lived only in reflection, when scenes come before the mind in perspective and in an orderly sequence.

What does a man think of, when he pulls the ring in a hand grenade and throws it at a machine-gun nest? He thinks merely of getting it out of his hand, throwing it as accurately as he can toward the machine-gun nest, and dropping for cover. He doesn't think profound thoughts about the cause he is fighting for, or the civilization that makes him wipe out several lives around the machine gun. He is too busy to philosophize; too deadened by fatigue to think deep thoughts; and he is more likely to be irritated by a chafing boot, or stinging brambles in the brush piercing his palms as he falls, than to be thinking heroic thoughts. When he hears his grenade blow up, feels the ground tremble, and waits for the ear-splitting crash to stop ringing in his head, he pokes his head up cautiously, looks at the emplacement, and does not figuratively rub his hands and say: "Ah, I got four that time." Instead,

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he looks from left to right and in the rear, another grenade in his hand, ready to throw it.

He rises higher, still crouched, surveying the scene, and if he sees upturned toes on one side of the machine gun, dangling listless arms on the other, a prostrate body, with head tilted back, in the rear, he advances, still crouched, until he can put his hand on the machine gun, ready to swing it. If he hears crunching underbrush near by, he yells the French equivalent of "Come on out, sucker, the war is all over for you."

Sometimes they walk out with hands in the air. Sometimes they run away in panic. Sometimes they stumble out dazed and mindless, like victims of amnesia.

Sometimes you are alone in that experience. More often, there is a Legionnaire on your right or left, a Legionnaire whose breathing is as heavy as yours. You look at him, and you are looking into a mirror. His clothes are dirty, covered with dust. His face is brown with dust, streaked beneath the eyes where they have watered, and clear about the lips where he has wiped them with the sleeve of his tunic. He throws a grenade, and you hear him grunt, and swear violently — deep, soulful and venomous profanity.

When I could sit back quietly in Massawa and

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reflect, talk to other officers in the Legion at mess, tell them my experiences as I recalled them, and listen to theirs as they recited them, I could look back on it with a clear head. So much that I had overlooked and forgotten depended upon that engagement. Until then my platoon was an assortment of faces and forms, some of them anonymous, others distinctive. Three quarters of them were shot away, some killed, some wounded. Those who remained became clear, definite individuals. I was an officer. They were enlisted men. We were separated by the chasm that exists between officers and men in all armies; but after that, they were Jacques and Jean, Miguel and Don, Roberto and Manuel. My attitude toward them had changed since the day we left Point B, and their attitude toward me was different. I came to them an "American" officer, a foreigner, untried and untested. They had heard that I had served in Finland in the Ambulance Corps and had my arm broken by a shell, but they shrugged their shoulders. They had no personal experience with me. They had not voted on me as an officer to lead them. Other officers had accepted me by vote, and, from the soldiers' point of view, I was thrust upon them as their leader.

Their lives depended upon me. They were in-

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clined to be critical, and had held themselves as indifferent as jurors, waiting to see how I would perform. Even Blashiek, my batman, might have had his doubts. Somewhere along the line, in those desert mountain hills, after Point B, and before Enghiahat, a transition in their attitudes began. Perhaps it was when we were thirsty and hungry, ready to drop in our tracks under that broiling sun, when lips and tongues were swollen, and red eyes were popping from their sockets, and we plodded along as though up to our knees in concrete. After that, I had their confidence. I could feel it. And they would follow me to hell.

Now, when I approached the platoon, brought up to full strength again, and faced them outside the barracks in Massawa, I knew that Jacques and Jean, Miguel and Don, and the rest of those familiar faces, had awarded me the invisible spurs that make an officer and that break him if they are withheld; spurs that superior officers recognize as completely as the enlisted men in the command. When I approached within twenty paces now, their shoulders instinctively squared; their rifles came closer to their sides, anticipating the command "*Attention!*"

I had never experienced that kind of confidence before. From now on, the Foreign Legion and my

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own command always would be first and foremost in my mind.

The day after we took Massawa, I was surprised, almost to the point of being speechless, to receive a cablegram of congratulation on the feat and good work of the Foreign Legion, from my parents in Bridgewater. They had been sitting beside the radio on the night before, and heard a broadcast out of Cairo by way of London on a national network. Communications lines from Cairo to Massawa were still intact, and their cable was delivered.

The campaign had taken a good deal out of all of us. We were close to exhaustion and it would be weeks before we recovered. In that weakened condition, the heat in Massawa knocked me out, and I was sent back to Ghinda, in the mountains, where the medical corps had set up a base. All of the wounded were hospitalized there, and I was among them. It was cool and pleasant in the hospital tents. The climate was comfortable, and there were green vegetables from Italian farms. It was like a vacation resort, and soldiers often went there on leave. Asmara was close by. A surprisingly modern city in that part of the country, it had three movie houses showing American films, and there were brick buildings and clean streets. When I had re-

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covered, I spent my evenings there and met a number of nice Italian people who had been sent from Italy to colonize the place. Most of them were wistful and homesick for their native Italy, hopeful that someday they might go back there. They had not wanted to come, and hated Mussolini for pulling up their roots, transplanting them and disrupting their lives. They did not behave like a conquered people, either. Italian residents were glad that we had come, tried to make us comfortable, and were very friendly.

When I returned to Massawa, our troops were reviewed by General Platts, in command of the Allied Forces in the campaigns in Eritrea. Our own men were now installed in the Italian military garrisons. One night Captain Reynard, of the Signal Corps, came into the officers' mess, a paper in his hand, and a light in his eye indicating that he had something important to say, although it was impossible for him to suppress a slight smile at the corners of his lips. He was in charge of communications and maintained a watch of all radio broadcasts.

"One moment, please," he interrupted our meal, and we looked up. He looked down at the paper and spoke with an inflection of heavy drama. "I have the honor to inform you, gentlemen," he said,

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"that in radio broadcasts in both Rome and Vichy, the following men have been condemned to death." He read a long list, and among the names of those condemned was mine.

The Italians had left behind a number of cases of Chianti, and we had it served with our meals. When he completed the list, one of the condemned men arose. "A toast to the condemned," he offered. I arose with the others, and we drank to the sentence of death.

The harbor was so full of sunken ships that clearing them away was an extensive naval project. Minesweepers were clearing the harbor of mines, freeing channels of derelicts, retrieving and repairing damaged ships. Piers and wharves needed attention. The Free French Navy and the British naval units combined in the operations, and a number were salvaged. More than sixty ships of all sizes, both passenger and cargo, had been scuttled.

Officers of all of the allied forces had a big party on the night of April 15, Foreign Legion Day, traditionally celebrated without interruption for more than a century. The anniversary of the first great victory in the history of the Legion, it came hard upon our first big victory in Africa. There was double cause for high jinks. More than 200 officers of French and English armies and navies sat down

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to a banquet, and a telegram of good wishes was sent to the Vichy-French troops in Morocco, home of the Foreign Legion. Although different in their allegiance, the Free French Foreign Legion could not ignore such a courtesy on that day. The party went well into the night.

The soldiers of the Legion put on their own show for their own benefit and enjoyment and in a big open air Italian amphitheater, and permitted officers to look on. For one day they could mimic their officers, lampoon and make sport of them; and some of the officers' faces were quite red. They sang parodies and risqué songs, ribbed commanders, big and small, put on acts that repeated painful episodes in various commands, and made jokes of things that were ordinarily contemplated with military sanctimony.

Even recent experiences outside Massawa became parts of vaudeville skits. A Legionnaire, notorious for his complete, dead-pan indifference, was portrayed among ground troops under terrific shelling from artillery, and bombing from the air.

"People would pay big money to have such a grandstand seat at this spectacle," a soldier observed.

"*C'est toujours une bonne maison*," the indifferent one shrugged his shoulder and replied.

We remained in Massawa until May 2, and most of us were sorry to leave the place. Except for the

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heat, it had been comfortable, and we had had real beds to sleep on. More and more French boats arrived now. Among them was the *President Doumet*, which had transported the Foreign Legion from Norway, and was now in service in the Mediterranean. We picked up our kits, left the cheerful Italian quarters, and filed aboard the ship.

The heat in Massawa was terrific on the day we left. The temperature was in the hundreds, worse than anything I had ever felt. I had been in Texas when the glass read 115°, but it could not compare with this. We sailed up the Red Sea and into the Suez Canal. We passed various small settlements, stopped momentarily at one of them, but were not allowed ashore.

The Canal was guarded by Free French troops, and each time we passed a Foreign Legion garrison, it was turned out, a guard of honor to salute us. Bugles rang and drums rolled, and bands played "*Le Boudin,*" the song of the Foreign Legion, and troops presented arms as we passed.

At a certain point in the Canal we disembarked, boarded waiting trains, and sped through the desert all night and well into the following morning, to Gaza, and went into camp not far from there. In the meantime, fleets of trucks had been coming across the desert from French Equatorial Africa to

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carry us on to Palestine, where we found soldiers from the Colonies and from France itself, who had rallied to the cause, and joined the Free French forces. They were pouring into Palestine by thousands.

It was the height of the orange season, a pleasant and cheerful sight to our eyes, and we pitched our tents for training maneuvers to get back into condition again. We had good meat, some vegetables and plenty of fruits. We had carried a large number of our own wounded up from Massawa to send them to British hospitals, and these were delivered. We were given leaves to visit Tel-Aviv and Jerusalem. Both were very close by. In Tel-Aviv, a modern Jewish city, we could have anything we wanted, including very good beer, or for other tastes, excellent American ice cream. There were night clubs with good food and good shows, always well patronized, and the city was crowded with Jewish refugees from European countries. Although the German Jews among them hated the Nazis, all of them looked forward to going back to Germany again when the war was over. That was their native land, and in spite of everything, they loved it.

I visited the old city of Jerusalem, where I had

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been in 1934; the muddy, slopping Jordan, where, as a tourist, I had whispered sweet nothings in a pretty girl's ear, and the Dead Sea, where in those days I had gone swimming merely to prove that I couldn't sink, recalling, as I looked upon it again, the injunction that if salt gets in your eye you should dry your thumb and draw it across your eyes: the wet salt will stick to your dry thumb. This time I had no intention of either swimming or de-salting my eyes. I went on a pilgrimage to the Way of Sorrows and the ancient religious places I had known as a tourist, and wondered if nice people in mufti would ever again be able to move freely over the face of the earth.

The etesian winds had begun to blow their annual hot blasts, as though from a monstrous open furnace door, the desert counterpart of dog days, and an afternoon siesta of two-and-a-half hours was made compulsory for all officers and men. Training was out of the question — and fighting, where these winds blow, utterly impossible during the season. We had mild workouts in the morning when it was cool, but in the afternoon "What's cooking?" was never a gag. Everybody was.

Recruits who had escaped from conquered countries were still coming to us. One of these showed up one day in the uniform of a Lieutenant of the

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French Foreign Legion. He was shown to our officers' quarters, where a Captain approached to greet him, but the strange Lieutenant stepped back stiffly and said: "I am not an officer in the Foreign Legion, sir. I am a private. I escaped from Syria in this officer's uniform."

"Where's the officer?" the Captain asked.

"He is still there, sir," the soldier answered. No further explanation was given, and none was asked. Personal questions are never asked of officers or soldiers in the Foreign Legion. He was welcomed, nevertheless, stripped of his stolen suit, and was issued a private's uniform.

We heard a lot of talk here about American arms coming to us, but none ever showed up.

Our stay in Palestine was gay and cheerful. Something was always going on, and we were extensively entertained. The Spahis were also in garrison there, a crack mounted unit, famous in the French Army for rough riding, military circuses, and lavish entertainments. They use horses and camels, and spend patient hours training them. They gave a party in our honor, scoured the countryside for goats, and we were their guests at a native feast. General Legentilhomme and all of the officers of the Legion attended, standing around in a field, as goats were roasted on spits over hot coals.

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The Spahis did their stuff on a desert parade ground, hard and trick riding, on horses and camels, and Barnum or Ringling could not have put on a better show. When it was over, we went to a big circus tent where roasted goats were placed upon a long table, and officers filed by, following the Spahis' custom, ripping off a leg, and picking it up in their hands to eat it, or carving a slice of more succulent sections of goat. It was tasty, and I enjoyed it.

A few days later, it was announced that our next action would be in Syria. Jerusalem had been a focal point for all allied troops. Quartered around us, in addition to the Spahis, were Indians and Australians. The Australians left us first, and went toward Beirut, and the Indians became part of our command. As we prepared for invasion, a fleet of 200 or more buses was assembled, a nondescript, Coxey's Army motor transport unit of ancient, wheezing American jitneys and jalopies. In the United States, they would disgrace a respectable junk pile. Probably most of them came from American second- and third-rate auto yards. Some of them had hairpins and paper clips for cotter pins. Windshields were stuck together with adhesive tape. Tires were worn thin and were ringed

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with white, flat patches of bare fabric. Some of these rattletraps were relics of passenger service on Fifth Avenue, in Philadelphia and Cleveland, or were once school buses in American cities and towns. The trucks were apparently cast-offs of trucking, hauling and express companies.

There was a repair section to keep them in order, and a corps of magician mechanics stuck things together under hoods, using wrenches, screw drivers and prayers. Part of this motley motorcade had come by ship. Others had been driven across the deserts. Almost every make of car in the world, most of them American, was in line; and these were to take an invasion force into Syria.

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Chapter Fifteen

THE eastern flank of the British forces seemed to be fairly well anchored at Tobruk. All of Egypt was now in control of the British and Free French. The approaches to the Suez Canal from the west were reasonably safe, and would remain so unless the British were forced back. Danger to the Canal was now east of Suez, in Syria, and the focal point there was Damascus. Our mission was to move swiftly, in blitzkrieg technique, across Palestine and Trans-Jordan, into Syria to take Damascus — and this, in turn, would place us in a strategic position to defend the oil wells of Iraq. There was a sizable enemy force in Syria, equipped with planes and tanks. As far as we knew, we had neither. There were no tanks in our caravan, although we had a vague hope that when we finally engaged the enemy, the Free French or British High Commands might be able to conjure up a few

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planes to give us at least some form of air protection.

Early on a hot June morning, Assembly sounded after mess. Our packs and equipment were ready and we fell in beside the line of trucks snaking into the desert. Commands and reports were called by non-coms and officers in the still morning air. "All present or accounted for," Weisskopf sang, and I about-faced and repeated it to Captain Morel.

He nodded. "Into the trucks," he said crisply and walked from one to the other, a swagger stick in his hand, checking the soldiers in. We wore shorts, woolen blouses, woolen socks and white cork helmets, and the packs strapped to our backs — each with blanket, rations, and six hand grenades — weighed about sixty pounds apiece. Each man and officer had six more hand grenades strung around his belt.

The men of my platoon climbed into a canvas-covered van, as Captain Morel stood by. Where the van came from, it was impossible to tell. It was old and weather-beaten. The brown canvas top had been bleached white by years in the sun, and the fabric was so thin and aged that an accidental finger-poke would rip it.

In ten or fifteen minutes the desert was clear of men. All were in the trucks sitting on floors and

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sideboards, trying to find comfortable positions for a long ride. I sat in the cabin with the driver, and a dispatcher moved from the head of the line to each truck, jerked a swagger stick toward the east. Clutches slipped into gear, grinding and groaning, and the motor caravan moved slowly across the desert.

In a few hours, the sun was high; heat was intense, and the cloud of dust from a thousand wheels swept across the desert like a sandstorm. The cabin was an oven, and not much worse than the covered body behind us. Perspiration dripped from our noses and chins, and our clothing was soaked. Heat rose in shimmering waves all around us. The metal of the truck was burning to the touch. Water had been rationed before we shoved off, and we were economical with it. Engine radiators were thirsty and boiling, and we winced when it became necessary to pour water into them.

We were constantly scanning the sky for planes. It seemed impossible that such a cloud of sand could be stirred up without attracting attention scores of miles away.

As we moved at twenty-five to thirty miles an hour across the desert wastes, all signs of life quickly disappeared, and as far as we could see, there was only hot, burning sand. Already trucks were falling

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by the way. Sand from cars far ahead filled the air and obscured the sun, and it drifted back upon us, almost like snow. It gathered in corners and crevices, on fenders, and danced at the borders of windshields. It whipped against the honeycombs of radiators, lodged there, and interfered with engine cooling systems. We stopped two or three times during the day, waiting for stragglers to come up as repair crews followed the breakdowns across the sand.

By nightfall, we had reached the base of the bare, treeless mountain foothills, and came to a halt to eat and rest. Our rations were tins of bully beef from Libby's in Chicago, a package of hardtack a day, and barely enough water to wash it down. We scooped holes in the sand for beds that night, rolled up in our blankets and slept until daybreak, and after a bully beef and hardtack breakfast climbed back into the trucks, now moving slowly up toward the mountain passes. Somehow, those resourceful mechanics kept the chugging, coughing buses rolling, and we covered about 250 more miles in the furnace made by sun-baked rocks, halting again at nightfall to eat and to roll in blankets for six or seven hours' sleep.

On the third morning, my own troop truck chattered for a while, shuddered, coughed and quit.

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There were enough things the matter with it to give an ordinary mechanic a nightmare. Brakes were so thin that the truck rolled down mountainsides like a roller coaster, endangering any luckless truck ahead, not to mention ourselves. It was an ancient and imposing jalopy of about two tons, and what natural erosion had not already accomplished, sand polished off.

A repair crew rolled up beside us, so coated in grease that they looked like Black troops; they lifted up the hood. One of them unloosed a fouled gas line, sucked a mouthful of gas and spat it out, unscrewed plugs and gadgets and replaced them, replaced a battery, and three of them worked steadily on it for about twelve hours, while the men of my platoon dug holes in the earth, rearranged rocks to provide shade, rolled themselves in blankets and went off to sleep. Since there was nothing further that I could do, I rigged a ration crate for a shelter and joined them.

Twenty-four hours later, on Tuesday morning, June 10, I caught up with my unit in the convoy just as it was crossing the Syrian border at Dera'a. Dera'a was a sizable settlement where we might have replenished supplies, but there was no pause, and no time to spare or waste. We were going to-

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LIEUTENANT HASEY IN SYRIA

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ward Damascus as fast as the jalopies would carry us, and we shoved off immediately. My orders were to proceed directly to the airport at Damascus. Indian troops were now out in front of us, and we were to remain in reserve, backing up the Indian troops until further orders. Indian troops had left Palestine three days ahead of us, and now, for the first time, we ran into the grim, visible evidences of fighting. The first of the wounded were being carried back in trucks along the very road where we were moving ahead. Word came back to us that Indian troops had surrounded Kisque, the only fortified town of importance on the road to Damascus.

We continued on in our truck convoy to Kisque, and this, for us, was the end of the line. Kisque had been captured and subdued, and we found that it was not much more than a fairly large settlement around a gas pump. It was now our task to carry on where the Indian troops left off, and go through to Damascus. We dismounted and deployed to minimize ourselves as a target for planes and spread out in the stub-like brush and rocks, following a serpentine road that wound around rocks and low hills. The road was of hard dirt, and at some time in the far distant past, it might have been oiled. Spearheads went ahead to engage the enemy, to set

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up observation posts, with periscopes peeping above the rocks, and patrols were dispatched to reconnoiter and return with information.

It was dawn when we set out, and our timetable was to bring us to the last lap of forced march upon Damascus in the dead of night. Throughout the early morning hours, we covered ground swiftly, taking advantage of the coolest air we would have, and the visibility of early morning twilight, but when the sun came up, we slowed down. Heat began to mount, and between sunrise and noon we marched from Purgatory to Hell. A supply line was operating, a long, thin, perilous relay of trucks, camels, burros and carts, from Jerusalem across the desert and over mountain passes to Kisque carrying food, water and ammunition, but it did not extend yet to the front beyond Kisque.

The blazing sun beat down upon us; the heat of sand, and of rocks like hot coals, came through the soles of our shoes. Once again I saw my men with red eyes, blue jaws, swollen lips and the faint white signs of intense thirst around their mouths. My own tongue seemed to fill my mouth. Planes came over, and we welcomed them, waved arms and guns, and signaled that we needed supplies. They were French planes, and we felt sure they would return and

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LEGION OBSERVATION POST OUTSIDE DAMASCUS

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THE LIEUTENANT AFTER THIRTEEN DAYS' CAMPAIGNING

ATTACKING WITH TANKS NEAR DAMASCUS

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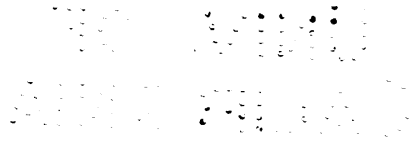

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drop containers and water by parachute. We plodded on throughout the afternoon heat, stumbling occasionally and picking ourselves up, always looking aloft for planes. They came back, and we halted to watch them, until we discovered that they had come back with loaded bomb racks. Bombs fell all around us, splitting the air with thunder, blowing craters in the ground, and throwing sand and rocks high into the air. We dived into the shale and burrowed for cover. For an hour or more they remained above us, and for them it was a field day. We had no antiaircraft guns and no protection. When it was all over, and we were able to stand erect again, I looked around to take tally of my command, and found that fourteen of them, a third of my platoon, were either dead or badly wounded.

Before sunset, we halted to rest. Supplies came up and with them water — water that must be drunk sparingly now, not only because it was scarce, but because our own systems could not stand it in large quantities. Word came back from an observer that there were tanks ahead. We were now in the front line, and hand grenades were the only weapons we had to combat tanks, an almost futile means of putting them out of action. Reserves came up. We rested for a few hours, and then re-

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sumed our march in the darkness, plodding ahead on the uneven, rocky ground toward the city. The prospect of meeting tanks was in everybody's mind.

That prospect was also in the mind of the Colonel and the Command behind us, and apparently it altered the timetable. The following morning we were ordered to halt and dig in, and in a little while, French 75's were rumbling over the dirt road from Kisque, and hauled by trucks and tractors into position around us, directly on the firing line — an operation rarely employed in modern military strategy, seldom used even during the first World War. And the 75's did not arrive a minute too soon. Even while they were being wheeled into position, a formation of tanks rolled and bounced over the hills before us. The French 75's roared into action and blew them to bits. Those 75's saved my life and the lives of all of the men in the battalion. But for them, we would have been liquidated — crushed beneath tank treads, or mowed down by their guns.

We continued marching forward, but now we were in direct contact with the enemy. The tanks had been blazing the way for supporting infantry, and for the first time we were engaged in battle in a stable line, digging in, and firing over the para-

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pets of our own protecting holes in the sand, or from behind the rocks and boulders that form the terrain in Syria. There were several days of this, but each day our position improved. The supply line was operating without interruption. Food, water, ammunition and reserves were coming up.

On the thirteenth day of the Syrian campaign, we were within ten miles of the city, and could see it in the distance. By now, I had a blond beard. The men of my platoon were grizzly. None of them had shaved in weeks. We were dirty and suffering from lice. Over several days we had surged forward and fallen back, surged forward again, and fallen back to re-form. We had taken a large number of prisoners, mostly Moroccans who had been in General Weygand's command, and we had reached the pillboxes and machine-gun emplacements that Weygand had designed in the outer fortifications of Damascus. We now had meager airplane support, barely enough to beat back Nazis who were flying Vichy-French planes.

The first attack, that brought us to within ten miles of the city, was concluded; and on the morning of June 19, we re-formed for the second attack. This one was to carry my platoon across the remaining desert and through the city of Damascus to the airport. We had studied the map so long

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and so often that we knew exactly how we would get there.

My platoon was now placed in the second position, supporting the spearhead, and at zero hour in the blackness of night we followed the spearhead for two miles. Pillboxes and machine-gun nests now opened up in a rear-guard action, covering the retreat of Vichy troops, who were falling back to re-form for a final defense of the city.

Eight miles from the city, the spearhead encountered a strong force of rifles and machine guns and was forced to dig in. We came up to support them in the morning, dug in, and fought all day long under a hot, burning sun that sent the temperature up to around 115°. Once again, my platoon was being decimated, but somehow I seemed to escape the bullets that whined over my head. By nightfall, the spearhead had been entirely wiped out, and my platoon was now in first position.

The following morning, we were still eight miles from Damascus, still deployed on each side of the weaving, hard road, but almost every hill was a machine-gun nest that had to be wiped out by crawling upon it and throwing hand grenades into it. We crawled and sprinted about a mile and a half through the stub brush and over rocks. Because of a semicircular sweep of the road, my platoon was now on the left side of it, and about

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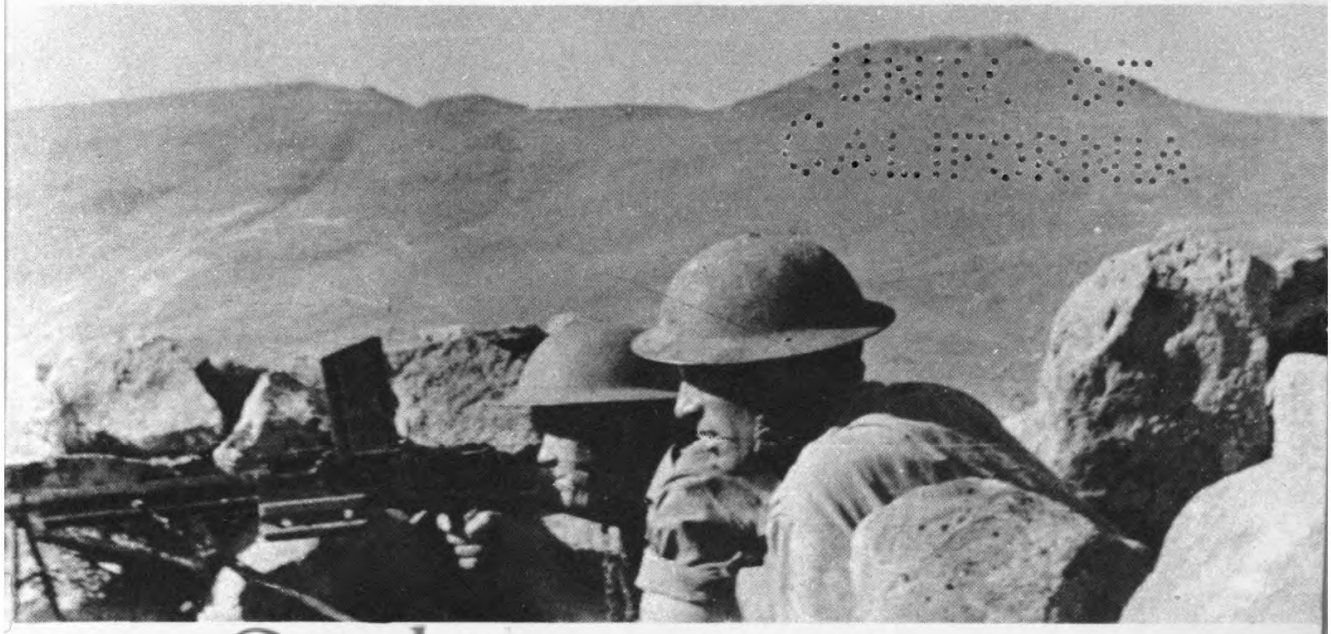
GERMANS IN VICHY-FRENCH PLANES BOMB THE LEGION

MOTOR CONVOY TRUCK IN THE SUDAN



PART OF CASEY'S PLATOON NEAR KISQUE

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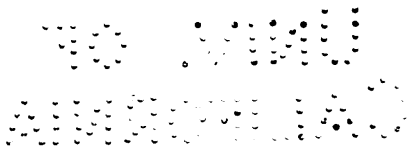

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200 yards in from the road. Crawling slowly toward the city, we came to twin hills, about 125 yards apart, small hillocks or rises in the ground. The amplified typewriter rattle of machine-gun fire revealed a machine-gun nest on the hill nearest the road, and it followed that the hill farthest from it must also be fortified. Creeping through the brush toward the first position, I was in the lead of my platoon, and came up slowly to charge the first hill. As I crouched, rushing forward, the machine gun on the second hill rattled. I felt a numbness in my throat and chest, a peculiar sensation of being pushed back while going forward, and dropped for protection — too late.

As I lay on the ground, panting and breathless, I tasted blood in my throat, and felt the trickle about my jaw and chest. One of the machine-gun bullets had struck me in the chest, an inch or so above the heart, and had torn a hole clear through me. My right hand had been pierced and another hole extended from little finger to thumb. My throat had been sprayed with machine-gun fire. My chin was shattered and my jaw was unhinged.

My fighting days in that part of the world were over. When Blashiek dragged me out, I was facing the west, beginning a long journey back to Bridgewater, Massachusetts, from a bloody hillock outside Damascus in Syria.

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Chapter Sixteen

THE road back to Bridgewater from that mound in Syria was long and tortuous. I walked part of the way, resting on the shoulder of Blashiek; I reported to my Major, who tied my chin in place with his handkerchief, and continued on to the motor highway. A half-mile from the hill, stumbling along the hard, dirt road, I was picked up by a truck and rushed eight miles back to the First Aid station at Kisque. A surgeon, in a quick diagnosis, decided that I must have a tracheotome tube in my neck to keep breathing. He had no such equipment, and sent me back with an orderly to a farmhouse in a small town, where the Free French had established a Field Hospital, and there, on a crude, makeshift operating table, the tube was inserted in the wound.

The next morning I was placed on a stretcher again and carried back in an ambulance to Dera'a

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to a larger hospital, functioning as a clearing station for wounded. No food could pass my throat, and another surgeon decided that my stomach must be opened to introduce a gastronomy tube, so that I could take food, and not die of starvation. He had no anesthesia and the operation was imperative to save my life. He opened my stomach with the assistance of four soldiers, and without anesthesia. The soldiers pinioned me to the operation table, one on each arm and leg. Throughout all of this I could not lose consciousness. It might have been easier for me had I been able to do so. I could not drink water. It stung my throat like acid, and ran out of the wounds in my neck. For three months, nothing passed my lips, except for frequent mouth washings.

I remained for some time at the hospital in Deraʿa. General Catroux visited me there and gave me encouragement, and the boys from the American Field Service took my case in hand, saw to it that I got the best treatment, and helped to make me comfortable.

From Deraʿa I was carried to Nazareth by a Red Cross hospital truck, and was delivered to an Australian clearing station. I stayed there for five days. I could not speak; I could not write notes — I was too weak to move. In a curious mix-up, I was

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mistaken for a wounded prisoner; and I could not explain. An Australian surgeon took an interest in my case. The nature of the wounds intrigued him, and he seemed to think it was a challenge to his professional skill. Somehow he discovered that I was an American with the Free French Foreign Legion, and became so heated and indignant about the case that fur flew all over that hospital. From that time on, he paid very careful and particular attention to me. He was a rabid baseball fan, and one of his major complaints about the war was that he could not follow the Cincinnati Reds, or keep track of their standing in the League, until days after a game had been played. As I grew stronger, he talked baseball, and I wrote my observations on a pad for him.

I was sent back to a military hospital near Jerusalem, a barracks, where my bed was among fifty or more, all laden with soldiers, and here some of my wounds cleared up. A machine-gun bullet had pierced my left side, three inches above the heart, and had come out the back; it had left a clean hole.

The preliminary work of restoration was begun by Major Lumsden of Edinburgh. He replaced the roof of my mouth and did some reconstruction on my chin. He removed the tube from my neck, and replaced it with a small metal valve, strapped

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over a hole in front, providing enough mechanical vocal apparatus so that I could whisper.

One day, Colonel Amilakvari, Captain Morel of my company, and Captain Delavinne, who had been my roommate in Douala, came to visit me, and in a quiet ceremony before the other wounded prisoners in the barracks the Colonel read a citation and presented me with a Croix de Guerre with Star, for my work in Cheren. Patients in the barracks raised themselves on elbows to look on. When this was over, the officers were smiling, genial, cheerful and encouraging.

A whisper went from bed to bed among the patients that my visitors were General de Gaulle and his aides, and the patients looked on wide-eyed and awestruck. After the officers had departed I found, as I often did in the early months of convalescence, that the loss of my voice was an exasperation. Fellow patients were congratulating me on the visit of de Gaulle, and I could not explain that he was not de Gaulle. It was hours before I could whisper the facts to an attendant, and tell my friends what had actually happened.

After a few more months, I was able to be up and to go out, although part of my face was rigid and expressionless. All of the medical staff of the hospital came from Scotland, including Molly Gay-

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thorpe, my nurse. On her time off, Molly and I made the rounds of the night clubs in Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv. I celebrated my birthday in the hospital. Henry Gorrell of the United Press came to see me, and gave me a silver cigarette case. He and I and Pat O'Sullivan of the Associated Press usually made a threesome around Jerusalem.

And so finally I reached a special hospital for plastic work in Jerusalem. Doctors restored my neck by pulling the skin together to cover the holes; and it was from this hospital that I went up to Damascus, on that day off allowed me, to be decorated with Croix de Guerre with Palm.

The hospital staff gave me a reception when I got back. They had heard on the radio that I had been decorated, and they tried to make quite an event of it, but I am afraid I greeted their efforts with a sickly smile. I tried to enter into the spirit of it and to be cheerful and appreciative, but I was homesick. I was remembering. I sat with them downstairs and heard flattering words of praise, but I was tired and wan, uncomfortably conscious of my bandages, and of the fact that I was an invalid. It was, perhaps, a reaction to the excitement of the day, the familiar faces of officers and men with whom I had served, the men of my platoon who

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had fought beside me, and Blashiek, who was devoted to me and saved my life, and the strange, silent parting from them; standing before them as they passed in review, realizing that I would never again see them so.

When the reception was over, I returned to my bed, recalling, reflecting and remembering scenes of quiet camaraderie and violent action — tracing that strange pattern that brought me from a little New England town to the Jerusalem of Christ. Somewhere ahead of me was the road back to New England, a road becoming more obscure as war spread; a war in which I could not now fight. I reviewed a crowded life that night, and fell asleep, thinking of home.

* * *

I had been "boarded," as the British call it, by the medical authorities as "unfit for active service," so now I wrote to Colonel Amilakvari to inquire if this record would bar me from further service with the Foreign Legion. He forwarded the letter to General Koenig, and Captain Morel of my company came to the hospital to see me, carrying a message from the General that no matter what the record said, there would always be a place for me in the Foreign Legion if I could get back to duty.

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I continued to improve and life became more pleasant. I went to the movies in Jerusalem and saw Don Ameche and Betty Grable in "Down Argentine Way." I was entertained at cocktail parties in the King David Hotel by Americans there, and by Consul General Pinkerton and his Vice Consuls. American Consul Scott was very nice to me. He and his French wife came to the hospital to see me every week.

When the preliminary plastic work was done, I was given permission to return home, and the doctors certified that I was now able to travel. I wrote to General Catroux and told him so, and received a message from him saying that after reviewing my case, he had decided to send me back to the United States by any method of travel that I chose.

Long months went by, and I was still far from Bridgewater. My name was removed from the danger list on Sunday, August 31. I had been decorated by General Catroux on Sunday, October 19. I had been moved into the British General Hospital on October 30 for a plastic surgery operation. Christmas was approaching before I was ready to go home, and as I had my choice of transportation, under General Catroux's order, I decided to go home by plane.

I went up to Beirut and stayed at Spear's Mis-

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sion until transportation arrangements could be completed. Spear's Mission was in general charge of the hospital where I had had my first operation in Dera'a. It was cold in Beirut and snow was deep in the mountains on my way up. On the day before Christmas, the American consular office advised me that I was to fly down the coast to Cairo.

I climbed into the plane in very high spirits. At last I was on my way home. The plane took off from Beirut, circled, pointed its nose toward Cairo, and soon we were soaring over the desert. Then something went wrong. The engine spluttered. The plane lost altitude, glided downward. My heart sank with it. After all these months, was this, I wondered, the finale — to come down on the desert sands, in a forced landing, have the wheels sink in where there could be no traction, nose over and crack up?

The pilot pancaked the plane into the sand. It did not nose over. At least it was the kind of crack-up that we could walk away from. The pilot tinkered with the radio, and I spent Christmas Eve on the desert, thinking again of home and Christmas trees, yule log and gifts. For years I had been spending Christmas in strange places: on a transport off the Cameroons, in a religious mission

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in Paris, or in the Casino of Monte Carlo. Christmas means so much to a New England Yank; and now I was on a desert waiting for help to come.

But my own star must have been shining that night, even as another star shone over the same desert 1941 years ago. Three wise men from the East, in a plane from Cairo, picked us up, and at midnight I was in the Shepheard's Hotel; there I found that because of the delay, I had missed connection with the plane for the West Coast of Africa. I had to remain until other airplane arrangements could be made.

I spent Christmas Day at the home of American Minister Kirk, and met a number of Americans — flyers, technicians and newspapermen — and later Eve Curie, who had just come from America, and General Maxwell and the members of his military mission from the United States.

A few days later, I met General Koenig of the Free French Foreign Legion, and we spent a few evenings at the Menar House, in the desert, near the Sphinx, where there was light and laughter and music and gaiety. I went to the races and ran across Prince Ali Khan, who had been a good customer of mine at Cartier's. I finally boarded a French Army plane in Cairo and was flown to Khartoum, and passage was booked for me via Pan-

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American to Lagos, where, after a two-day wait, I boarded the Clipper — a different Clipper in appearance from the one that had brought me across the Atlantic. This was now stripped for action. Smoking room was gone. Seats had been removed, and it was jammed with freight, with only enough room for a few passengers.

We flew across the Atlantic to Natal in Brazil, and then to Belém, where I spent the night in a hotel. By now it was a strange sight to me to see people sitting around indifferently, sipping drinks at sidewalk cafés. We went on to Trinidad and San Juan, where I transferred to a Baby Clipper for Cuba and Miami.

At four o'clock in the afternoon of January 12, 1942, I was back again in the United States. I telephoned home, but my folks were in New York waiting for me. I came up via Eastern Airways, and got into New York the following morning at six o'clock. My parents and my brother Dick and his wife met me. A crowd of newspaper reporters and photographers crowded around. I answered questions as best I could under the handicap of the tube in my throat, posed for pictures and newsreels, and went on to the Hotel Roosevelt with my family. I was home again.

* * *

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This was a far different United States from the country I had left: a country at war, unified to a degree that I had never expected.

I wondered now why I had doubted those college boys when I appeared before them, after returning from Finland. Some had enlisted. Some were drafted. When the showdown came, they proved themselves. A number of questions that had disturbed me were already answered. Isolationists had become interventionists, and when the final trial came, I felt sure that my own country could stand up under it where so many other countries had failed. It was awake and alive, and that was balm to me. I heard people say, so often, that we were fighting to preserve "the American way," but I thought: We are fighting for much more than that. We are fighting to preserve, too, the English way, the Free French way, the democratic way.

I came back to my home in Bridgewater, among the friends and neighbors that I knew, and found that they were air-raid wardens and members of Red Cross corps, and of auxiliary police and fire departments; and I decided that my own country had learned an important part of the lesson.

As for myself, after a short rest, I went into the Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston where Dr. V. H. Kazanjian did more plastic surgery. A

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piece of bone was taken from my hip to create jaw and chin. For weeks I was bandaged again, and on the day of the unveiling, discovered that I had a new face that closely resembled the old one. The surgical sculpture is now almost completed. Next I shall lose the whistlelike tube in my throat, now easy to conceal under the collar of my shirt, and after that, if the war is still on, I'll find a way to get into it somehow.

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Citations

FREE FRENCH FORCES,
1st Division,
Battalion of the Foreign Legion.
13th Brigade Mixed of Legion and Colonial.

No. 32/F

Report of the proposal for the promotion to the rank of 1st Lieutenant, of 2nd Lieutenant John Hasey of the 2nd Company, Foreign Legion Battalion.

Of American nationality, 2nd Lieutenant Hasey, although living in France only a short time, enlisted in the Foreign Legion to fight against Germany.

Not being able to serve in a fighting force because of his American citizenship, he was not immediately accepted. Imbued with a desire to serve France at any cost, he entered the ambulance corps of his own country, which had been established in France.

After the Armistice, he went to England and joined the Free French Forces, at first in the ambulance corps,

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and later, at his own request, he was transferred to the Battalion of the Foreign Legion.

He took part in the campaigns of Eritrea, and his splendid behavior under fire, notably in the Battle of the Enghiahat, was rewarded with a citation of the order of the Corps of the Army. In this Battle, his Captain and First Lieutenant being wounded, he remained the only officer valid. His absolute indifference to danger inspired and galvanized his men.

During the siege of Massawa, he led his platoon with magnificent bravery in an assault upon enemy positions, which he captured along with a large number of prisoners. Finally, in the attack upon Position 748 outside Damascus, he was struck by machine-gun fire, wounding him seriously. Only a short time in the Legion, he knows how to win. He has the qualities of a man, of a soldier, and of a leader. He has won a place in the hearts of his comrades. Loved and respected by them, as well as by his leaders, Lieutenant John Hasey is the perfect type of foreigner, for whom the love of France is not vain words. For that love, he has paid dearly and generously with his blood.

When, later on, France regains her position in the world, when she will be able to recognize her own, Lieutenant John Hasey will receive the Cross of the Legion of Honor, of which the color of the ribbon will symbolize the blood he has spilled for France.

France will be able to say that she has not forgotten her adopted sons.

* * *

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HONOR AND COUNTRY

THE GENERAL OF THE ARMY, COMMANDER IN CHIEF.
For the Order of the Division.

Hasey, John, 2nd Lieutenant, 2nd Company

A young foreign officer, he changed branches of service to fight in a unit of infantry, and brilliantly distinguished himself in the attack upon Enghiahat (Eritrea, 2113M), March 15, 1941.

Two officers of his company being wounded, he transmitted, constantly under fire, the orders of his commanding officer. He took command of several elements in order to cover a difficult withdrawal, and until the 18th, patrolled without stopping, rescuing the wounded and recovering material.

Indifferent to danger and imbued with the highest possible sentiment, in this first engagement, he won also the esteem of the Legionnaires.

10 October 1941

LIEUT. COLONEL AMILAKVARI
Commander of the Brigade of the Foreign Legion.

HONOR AND COUNTRY

CITATION FOR THE ORDER OF THE ARMY WITH THE CROSS OF THE LIBERATION

HASEY, JOHN, LIEUTENANT

A magnificent officer, loved by his men: On June 20, 1941, he led his platoon in attacking a strongly defended position.

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Although placed in the second wave of the attack, he passed with his unit through to the head of the attack, and by his courage and absolute indifference to danger, played a role of the highest order. He was seriously wounded in this action.

An officer of great courage, he does honor to the Legion.

19 October 1941

LIEUT. COLONEL AMILAKVARI
Commander of the Brigade.

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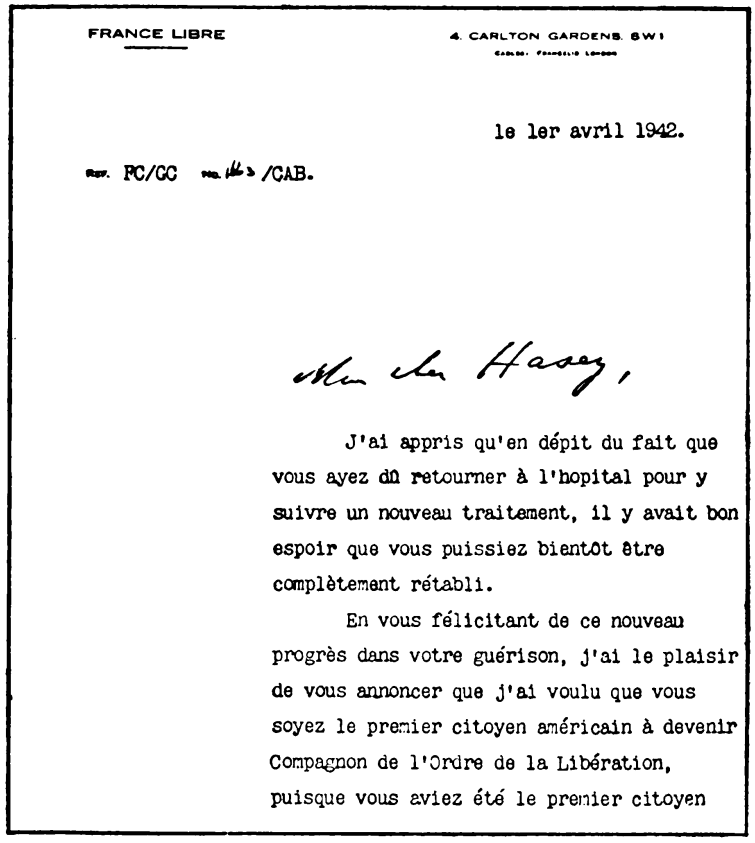

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le 1er avril 1942.

Réf. PC/GC n° 46 /CAB.

Mon cher Hasey,

J'ai appris qu'en dépit du fait que vous ayez dû retourner à l'hopital pour y suivre un nouveau traitement, il y avait bon espoir que vous puissiez bientôt être complètement rétabli.

En vous félicitant de ce nouveau progrès dans votre guérison, j'ai le plaisir de vous annoncer que j'ai voulu que vous soyez le premier citoyen américain à devenir Compagnon de l'Ordre de la Libération, puisque vous aviez été le premier citoyen

My dear Hasey:

I have been informed that in spite of the fact that you have been obliged to go back into the hospital for further treatment, there is every reason to believe that you are on the highroad to complete recovery.

While congratulating you on your physical improvement, it is an even greater pleasure to tell you that, just as you were the first American citizen to shed his blood to free France from the oppressors, so I wish you to be the first American citizen to become *Compagnon de l'Ordre de la Libération.*

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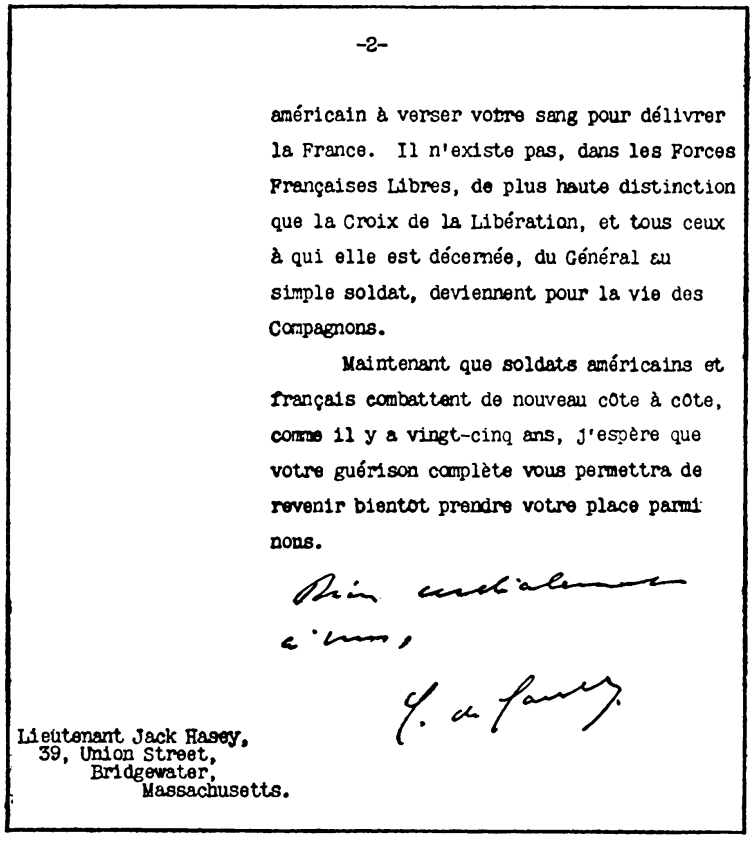

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américain à verser votre sang pour délivrer la France. Il n'existe pas, dans les Forces Françaises Libres, de plus haute distinction que la Croix de la Libération, et tous ceux à qui elle est décernée, du Général au simple soldat, deviennent pour la vie des Compagnons.

Maintenant que soldats américains et français combattent de nouveau côte à côte, comme il y a vingt-cinq ans, j'espère que votre guérison complète vous permettra de revenir bientôt prendre votre place parmi nous.

Bien cordialement à vous,

Lieutenant Jack Hasey,
39, Union Street,
Bridgewater,
Massachusetts.

The highest honor which can be bestowed upon a member of the Armed Forces of Free France is the *Croix de la Libération.* All those to whom it is awarded, from General to Private, become Companions for life.

Since today, as was the case twenty-five years ago, American and French soldiers are fighting side by side, I trust that the complete restoration of your health will make it possible for you to resume your place among us in the very near future.

CHARLES DE GAULLE

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